





*Photos by Clyde Butcher*

Clyde Butcher, noted for his striking black and white landscape photography of Florida's unspoiled natural areas, contributed the cover and inside photographs of the Save Our Rivers properties depicted in this document. Butcher says his objective is to show the pristine beauty of Florida. "My photographs reflect my feelings toward Florida as it was before man touched this earth, in the hope that they will inspire public interest in preservation, so that future generations will be able to enjoy the beauty that I find here."

*Save Our Rivers Program*

*1992 Five Year Plan*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CARL</b>	<b>Conservation and Recreation Lands Program</b>
<b>CREW</b>	<b>Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed</b>
<b>DER</b>	<b>Department of Environmental Regulation</b>
<b>DOF</b>	<b>Division of Forestry</b>
<b>DOT</b>	<b>Department of Transportation</b>
<b>DNR</b>	<b>Department of Natural Resources</b>
<b>DRSF</b>	<b>DuPuis Reserve State Forest</b>
<b>EEWEA</b>	<b>East Everglades Wildlife and Environmental Area</b>
<b>FNST</b>	<b>Florida National Scenic Trail</b>
<b>FTA</b>	<b>Florida Trail Association</b>
<b>GFC</b>	<b>Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission</b>
<b>MOA</b>	<b>Memorandum of Agreement</b>
<b>SCS</b>	<b>Soil Conservation Service</b>
<b>SFWMD</b>	<b>South Florida Water Management District</b>
<b>SITAC</b>	<b>Savannas Interagency Technical Advisory Committee</b>
<b>SOR</b>	<b>Save Our Rivers</b>
<b>SWIM</b>	<b>Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan</b>
<b>TNC</b>	<b>The Nature Conservancy</b>
<b>WUMP</b>	<b>Water Use Management Plan</b>
<b>VWCD</b>	<b>Valencia Water Control District</b>

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*Loxahatchee*

## **Introduction**

# INTRODUCTION

## SAVE OUR RIVERS PROGRAM

The South Florida Water Management District (District) is a regional agency working to protect and manage the wetlands, lakes, bays and rivers of south and central Florida. The District is the largest of five districts established across the state to act as guardians of the quality and supply of each region's present and future water resources. The mission of the District is to manage water and related resources for the benefit of the public and in keeping with the needs of the region. The key elements of the mission are:

- \* Environmental protection and enhancement
- \* Water supply
- \* Flood protection, and
- \* Water quality protection.

In 1981, the Florida Legislature enacted a program known as "Save Our Rivers (SOR)." The legislation created Section 373.59 Florida Statutes, the Water Management Land Trust Fund. The trust fund receives revenues from the documentary stamp tax and is administered by the Department of Environmental Regulation (DER). Section 373.59 enables the water management districts to use moneys from the trust fund for the acquisition of fee or other interest in lands necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources. The act specifies the allocation formula to each District and the process for use of the fund.

The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for acquiring such critical water resource lands in South Florida under the state's Save Our Rivers (SOR) program. The District program's key emphasis revolves around the major purposes of the program are water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources. As steward of these vital resources, it is the charge of the District to provide for their protection, enhancement, restoration, and preservation for the beneficial use and enjoyment of existing and future generations.

Manageability, surface and ground water systems, and the formation of corridors for the critical interaction of wildlife populations are major

considerations in the land acquisition process. Prime requisites in managing these public lands are to ensure that the water resources, fish and wildlife populations, and native plant communities are maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner, and made available for appropriate outdoor recreational activities consistent with their environmental sensitivity. The care and nurturing of these resources may be accomplished in cooperation with other governmental agencies and the private sector through the design and implementation of appropriate stewardship programs.

## PRESERVATION 2000 PROGRAM

The Florida Legislature finds that the alteration and development of Florida's natural areas have contributed to the degradation of water resources, the fragmentation and destruction of wildlife habitats, the loss of recreation space, and the diminishment of wetlands and forests. As a result, an aggressive program of public land acquisition was created to preserve the quality of life that attracts so many people to Florida. The program uses bond proceeds supported by the general revenue portion of the Documentary Stamp tax. Distribution of the funds includes supplementing the Save Our Rivers Program.

## SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, specifies that monies from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund shall be used for acquiring fee title or other interest in lands necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources. In addition, lands which include other features are eligible as well. These include, but are not limited to:

- \* River and stream flood plains and flow ways
- \* River and stream flood hazard areas
- \* Littoral zones
- \* Springs and lakes
- \* Aquifer recharge areas
- \* Wetlands
- \* Wellfields
- \* Unique water features

Each January, the South Florida Water Management District must submit to the Legislature and the Department of Environmental Regulation, pursuant to the Florida Resource Rivers Act, an annual update to the Five-Year Plan.

In 1988, the South Florida Water Management District began a proactive program of identifying lands within the District that might be suitable as candidates for acquisition. Save Our Rivers applications from private and public groups were reviewed, and District staff selected other sites for consideration from small-scale aerial photography.

**Land Evaluation Matrix** was developed which address the water and natural resource values of each parcel. The matrix consists of the following ten parameters:

- \* Water Management
- \* Water Supply
- \* Conservation and Protection of Water Resources
- \* Manageability
- \* Habitat Diversity
- \* Species Diversity
- \* Connectedness
- \* Rarity
- \* Vulnerability
- \* Nature Oriented Human Use

The Land Evaluation Matrix is set up to review parcels for the water resource related issues (Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources), before consideration is given to environmental values. If proposed projects do not have appropriate water resource values, they are not evaluated for the remaining seven categories.

Following on-site and aerial inspections of each tract, the value of each project, with regard to the matrix parameters, is determined by a team of senior technical staff. A detailed explanation of matrix parameters and scoring criteria is covered in **Appendix F**.

Following matrix scoring, projects are recommended by Save Our Rivers staff for inclusion on the Five-Year Plan. Those not receiving adequate scores are dropped from the list. Staff recommendations are presented to the Land Selection Committee, which consists of senior managers representing all of the District's departments. The endorsements or changes from the Land Selection Committee are presented to the Governing Board for final approval as the annual Five-Year Plan.

A **project benefits criteria system** is also utilized to address projects which protect the integrity of ecological systems and provide multiple off-site as well as on-site benefits. These include the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, recreation space, and water recharge areas. Projects are included in order to reverse the decline in the

ecological, aesthetic, recreational and economic value of the State's water resources.

This system applies to projects designed primarily to supply off-site water resource benefits. Thus, evaluation is performed not on the lands themselves, as with the resource-based matrix, but consider the way these lands will be utilized within the described project. Examples for benefits provided by such lands would be:

- A. Distribution systems to simulate sheet flow inputs into wetlands systems.
- B. Detention systems operated to simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into natural wetlands, lakes or estuaries.
- C. Water quality treatment system utilizing managed or unmanaged wetland vegetation processes.
- D. Groundwater recharge and/or water table control to facilitate recharge to aquifers or retain seepage from water storage facilities.
- E. Buffer, access or transitional areas necessary to protect core lands from adverse impacts, provide wildlife corridors, provide for public enjoyment of the core land, or isolate certain management practices such as flooding and prescribed burning.

All proposed projects must meet the following criteria: (any land acquisition would require prior Governing Board approval of the subject plan).

1. Proposed project lands are identified in a District Plan such as Water Use Management Plan (WUMP) or Surface Water Management Plan (SWIM), and
2. Subject lands would be utilized to provide simulated or naturally functioning water resource quality/quantity benefits, and
3. Lands would be part of the project resulting in net increase of natural resource values when considering both any on-site losses and off-site gains, and
4. Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs, and pumps shall be limited to only those necessary to achieve the proposed water resource benefits, and
5. All appropriate funding sources for acquisition have been identified.

Persons reviewing this plan should be aware that funding levels and other factors may not allow acquisition of all lands shown in the plan.

## **1991 SOR PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

Several SOR project applications were submitted in 1991. For all but one, the applications were for lands which are adjacent to existing projects. District Governing Board action resulted in boundary revisions that incorporated new applications into existing SOR projects. In addition, the 1991 Five-Year Plan was amended to expand the boundary of two existing projects. The following is a summary of actions taken in 1991:

### **BOUNDARY REVISIONS**

1. **Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW)** -- Add 7,300 acres to connect CREW with Panther National Wildlife Refuge.
2. **Kissimmee River**--Separate 4,800 acre Paradise Run portion--create separate project.
3. **Loxahatchee River**--Add 375 acre Loxahatchee Reserve.
4. **Pal-Mar**--Add 4,500 acre corridor which will connect Jonathan Dickinson State Park with Pal-Mar.
5. **Shingle Creek Swamp**--Delete lands east of Shingle Creek.
6. **Strazzulla**--Add 640 acre "Chingos" parcel.

### **NEW ADDITION TO 1992 FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

7. **Loxahatchee Slough**--Add 12,700 acre tract in Palm Beach County

### **1991 FIVE-YEAR PLAN AMENDMENTS**

8. **Fisheating Creek**--Added 18,000 acres of wetlands and upland buffer
9. **Reedy Creek Swamp**--Added 2500 acres to connect Reedy Creek and Lake Marion Creek watersheds, and combined the Reedy Creek Swamp, Lake Marion Creek, and Walker Ranch projects into a single SOR project, known as the Kissimmee Lakes Watershed.

## **SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCESS**

**SOR APPLICATION  
SUBMITTED BY  
PRIVATE  
INDIVIDUAL OR  
PUBLIC AGENCY**

**PROJECT  
PROPOSED FOR  
CONSIDERATION  
BY SAVE OUR  
RIVERS STAFF**

### **EVALUATION**

**NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
BASED MATRIX**

**PROJECT  
BENEFITS  
CRITERIA**

**SAVE OUR RIVERS STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION TO LAND  
SELECTION COMMITTEE**

**LAND SELECTION COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATION TO  
GOVERNING BOARD**

**GOVERNING BOARD  
ADOPTION OF  
5 YEAR PLAN**

# FLORIDA PRESERVATION 2000 ACT

This act (Section 259.101, F.S.), passed in 1990, provides funding to supplement land acquisition programs, including the Save Our Rivers program. The act allows for the purchase of water management lands, pursuant to Section 373.59, (Water Management Lands Trust Fund), using bond proceeds supported by the general revenue portion of the Documentary Stamp Tax. The act provides for up to 300 million dollars to be bonded annually for the next ten (10) years. The Save Our Rivers Program receives 30% of the proceeds, as allocated per Section 373.59. Each bond series must be appropriated by the legislature.

In addition to meeting the criteria specified in Section 373.59, the lands acquired shall meet at least one of the following, as specified by Section 259.101, F.S:

1. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of development;
2. A significant portion of the land in the project is in eminent danger of subdivision which will result in multiple ownership and may make acquisition of the project more costly or less likely to be accomplished;
3. The value of a significant portion of the land in the project is likely to appreciate at a rate that makes purchasing the land immediately, with Preservation 2000 funds, more cost effective than delaying acquisition until other funds are available;
4. A significant portion of the land in the project serves to protect or recharge groundwater and to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource based recreation;
5. The project can be purchased at eighty percent of appraised value or less; or

6. A significant portion of the land in the project serves as habitat for endangered or threatened species, or serves to protect endangered natural communities.

The development of Florida's natural areas to accommodate its growing population represents the potential to fragment and destroy wildlife habitats, eliminate natural resource-based recreation space, degrade water resources and alter characteristics of land for groundwater recharge.

The Florida Preservation 2000 Act requires that each water management district identify lands needed to protect or recharge groundwater. Such lands shall also serve to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation.

The District's Hydrogeology Division is currently working with the U.S. Geological Survey and the Hydrogeology Sub-Committee of the Blue Belt Commission to develop criteria for defining ground water recharge areas throughout the District. Once accepted, the criteria will be applied to the existing hydrogeologic database and a series of maps will be generated.

In the interim, the Hydrogeology Division has completed a preliminary report on the groundwater recharge characteristic of the Save Our Rivers acquisition areas.



*Corkscrew*

## **1991 Save Our Rivers Activities**



# LAND STEWARDSHIP

The Florida Resource Rivers Act specifically states that "Lands acquired with money from the fund shall be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition" and make available to the general public for appropriate recreational purposes. Further, Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, as amended, provides that up to 10% of the monies in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund may be allocated annually to the District for management, maintenance and capital improvements. District activities directed at achieving this level of stewardship are divided into the following categories:

## **STEWARDSHIP PLANNING**

### **STEWARDSHIP IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Restore and protect the natural state and condition of the land.
2. Manage and maintain in an environmentally acceptable manner.
3. Maximize public recreation.

## **STEWARDSHIP PLANNING**

Stewardship planning includes both the development of Conceptual and Operational Management Plans. Conceptual Management Plans are prepared to provide long-term goals and objectives and to establish a direction for the management of individual properties. Operational Management Plans are more specific with regard to what, why, how, and when various management activities will be undertaken, and which recreational activities are compatible.

A key element in the preparation of operational plans is the environmental assessment, which is conducted for each parcel. The environmental assessments supply descriptions of the existing plant and animal communities and make recommendations

for action to be taken to restore or maintain natural conditions.

The District has entered into cooperative management agreements with other public agencies, such as the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and Lee, Palm Beach, Martin and Orange Counties. Under these agreements, the District retains ownership of the lands, but management is undertaken at a level where it can have the most positive effect on the resource and its users.

When the District acquires land for a particular project, it is sometimes necessary to take title to portions that may exceed to the needs of the Save Our Rivers program. This is because the landowner is only willing to sell his entire holding. A process has been developed whereby acquired parcels are evaluated to determine if portions could be declared excess and made available for sale or trade.

To a large degree, excess lands evaluation is based on the parameters listed in the Project Evaluation Matrix. Other factors are taken into account as well. Those include:

1. What is the zoning of adjacent parcels or land-use designation under County Comprehensive Plan?
2. Are adjacent zoning and land-use designation compatible with remaining SOR lands?
3. Will more intensive development on excess lands have adverse impacts on, or affect, the District's ability to manage remaining SOR lands?
4. Is the excess area needed as an aesthetic or environmental buffer to remaining SOR lands?

## **STEWARDSHIP IMPLEMENTATION**

The District's efforts under stewardship implementation revolve around three major areas. The principal management efforts are listed under each heading, followed by a brief description of each:

1. Restore and protect the natural state and condition.
  - a. Hydrologic restoration
  - b. Exotic control
  - c. Habitat protection and enhancement



2. **Manage and maintain in an environmentally acceptable manner.**
  - a. Conserve, maintain and protect water resource-related features
  - b. Prescribed burning
  - c. Grazing
  - d. Fencing
3. **Provide public recreation**
  - a. Fishing and other water oriented activities
  - b. Hunting
  - c. Hiking
  - d. Camping
  - e. Horseback riding
  - f. Environmental and water resource education programs

## **RESTORE AND PROTECT**

**Hydrologic Restoration** -- The most important stewardship task is returning SOR lands to as near a natural state, hydrologically, as possible. This provides for groundwater storage in wetlands, water quality improvement by slowing the rate of surface runoff, and habitat improvement for fish and wildlife. The Kissimmee River is the District's most aggressive restoration effort. Less intense programs are either planned or underway at the DuPuis Reserve, Nicodemus Slough, Loxahatchee River, and Southern Glades (Canal 111). These efforts range from the installation of diversion dams and water control structures in the Kissimmee River to filling or blocking drainage swales and ditches at the DuPuis Reserve.

**Exotic Control** -- application of environmentally acceptable herbicides.

**Habitat Protection and Enhancement** -- Habitat enhancement on SOR lands includes a combination of hydrologic restoration in wetlands, prescribed burning to improve forage for wildlife and maintenance of native plant communities, and control of exotic vegetation.

## **MANAGE AND MAINTAIN**

**Conserve, Maintain and Protect Water Resource - Related Features** -- Natural features of the South Florida landscape are rapidly being lost to agricultural and urban development. A major thrust of the Save Our Rivers program is to protect the flow ways, watersheds, and wetlands, which are critical to the water resources of the District.

**Prescribed burning** -- Periodic fire is a natural element of native Florida ecosystems. The District uses prescribed burning as a tool for land management purposes, such as reduction of

hazardous fuel load build-up, wildlife habitat enhancement and encouraging the restoration of native plant communities. The District began burning SOR lands in 1988, and intends to burn the larger tracts on an approximate five year rotation. Lands where burning is occurring include the South Fork St. Lucie River and several of the tracts along the Kissimmee River. SOR lands in the East Everglades are being burned by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission and the National Park Service under a cooperative management agreement.

SOR lands on Big Pine Key will be burned by a yet to be selected contract manager.

**Grazing** -- Livestock grazing has been a customary activity on many of the lands purchased under the SOR Program. Studies have shown that when undertaken properly, livestock grazing is one of the most efficient means of effectively managing our native range lands. The District has been working closely with the USDA Soil Conservation Service and other cooperating agencies to identify properties, or portions of properties, suitable for this activity, and to design and implement grazing plans that are compatible with the goals and purposes of the program. Grazing leases will be typically of short duration (not in excess of five [5] years) and awarded through a process of competitive bidding. District policy prohibits the conversion of native range to improved pasture. Where properties have been acquired that contain improved pastures, measures will be implemented to encourage their conversion to native range or woodland.

**Fencing and Posting** -- In order to delineate the District's property lines, deter trespass/vandalism and protect the integrity of the resource, most major SOR land holdings are fenced and posted following acquisition. The District presently constructs or replaces approximately 30 miles of fence annually.

## **PUBLIC RECREATION**

**Fishing and Other Water-related Activities** -- Fishing, boating and canoeing are limited to those SOR projects associated with rivers, such as the Kissimmee, Loxahatchee and South Fork St. Lucie.

**Hunting** -- The District, in cooperation with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, has opened SOR lands that are large enough, and support adequate game populations, for public hunting. Hunt programs are designed to provide a quality hunting experience while maintaining healthy populations of game species. Seasonal harvest quotas are established by the commission and are based on annual population surveys. Annual hunting regulations are proposed by the Commission for each area and approved by the District. Walk-in hunting is encouraged, as vehicular access is limited to the use of street licensed vehicles (excluding motorcycles) on designated roads.

**Hiking and Camping** -- The Florida Trail Association (FTA) is working closely with the District on the development of hiking trails on SOR lands. Primitive campsites are being designated at appropriate locations along these trails for use by backpackers. Maintenance of the trails will be performed by FTA members. The Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST), one of eight officially designated national scenic trails, is currently being developed by FTA in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and a host of federal, state and local agencies and private landowners. A portion of the FNST has been certified for location along the Kissimmee River. Hiking trails provide a means by which visitors can view and enjoy, in quiet solitude, these sensitive lands. By eliminating areas used by off-road vehicles, plants and animal species are less likely to be subjected to adverse impacts.

**Horseback Riding** -- The District is consulting with a variety of horseback-riding interests regarding the development of equestrian trails on District lands. Thirty-six miles of Equestrian trails have been developed for the DuPuis Reserve, and it is anticipated that additional areas may be targeted in the future. Care is being taken to limit the construction of these trails to suitable ecosystem types and to avoid sensitive wetland areas. Trail development and maintenance will be undertaken by private trail-riding organizations and/or other public agencies under appropriate agreements with the District.

**Environmental Education** -- The District is developing an environmental education program to inform school groups and the general public about the importance of maintaining water resources and environmentally sensitive land tracts. Environmental education programs for teachers have been conducted at the DuPuis Reserve and the Loxahatchee River.

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **1991 LAND STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

### **LAND STEWARDSHIP PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT REPORT**

This report covers the period of July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991, and summarizes the Land Stewardship Planning and Management Activities for the District's Save Our Rivers lands. During the period of this report, the District's SOR land ownership increased 21%, from 127,397 acres to 155,295 acres. The strong success of our acquisition program points out the critical need for comprehensive Stewardship planning and solid land management capabilities.

As approved by the Governing Board, this and future SOR Five Year Plans will be prepared in coordination with the budget and presented to the Board for consideration in August.

### **BIG PINE KEY**

A one year management contract with The Nature Conservancy was approved by the Governing Board. The main purpose of this contract will be to develop a long-term management plan for habitat protection and restoration. This management plan will serve as a basis for preparation of a long-term management contract to begin in 1992.

### **CORKSCREW REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM WATERSHED (CREW)**

The multi-agency CREW management planning team continued its regular meetings during the past year. An interim management plan was released and will remain in effect until an operational management plan can be completed. An inspection of the Corkscrew Marsh was conducted by SOR staff with representatives of the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS). The SCS will undertake a formal assessment of the property and develop a recommended livestock grazing program. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission reservists have begun posting the property and conducting resource inventories.

The District and Lee County approved an agreement whereby Lee County would transfer deeds to any

land purchased by the County in the CREW project. This will facilitate a centralized management program.

### **NICODEMUS SLOUGH**

Glades County has tentatively agreed to cooperate with the District in managing public use of the project area. The terms of an agreement will be worked out over the next year. All features of the project have been completed, and the District has begun to regulate water levels in the marsh according to schedule established by the Environmental Sciences Division. A monitoring program has been established to evaluate effects on the marsh vegetation.

### **STRAZZULLA MARSH**

Fencing and posting of the property has been completed by SOR field personnel, and arrangements have been made for periodic patrol by the District's security contractor. These patrols have apprehended several trespassers, who had entered the property in four-wheel drive vehicles. The SOR field personnel also demolished and disposed of an illegal camp on this property. The Palm Beach County Communications Division has contacted SOR staff regarding the construction of a radio transmittal tower on the property. If approved by the District, exotic vegetation control will be done as mitigation for wetlands impacts.

### **DUPUIS RESERVE STATE FOREST (DuPuis Reserve)**

A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was executed during the year with the Division of Forestry (DOF). Under this arrangement, the reserve will be managed as the DuPuis Reserve State Forest (DRSF) with the DOF assuming the primary responsibility for wildfire protection, prescribed burning, roadway maintenance, timber management, and regulation of public use. A new MOA was executed with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission replacing an earlier tri-party agreement between the District, the Commission and the Department of Natural Resources. The Commission will continue its role in managing the fish and wildlife resources of the DRSF and regulating the quota-hunt program.

The DOF chaired the first annual meeting with the District and the Commission on management of the property. Work has begun on the development of an operational management plan for the DRSF. A public meeting will be scheduled by the DOF to receive comments and recommendations on the draft

plan prior to its finalization and adoption by the District and DOF.

Efforts to restore the property's former hydrology have continued with the installation of additional ditch blocks at locations selected by the Environmental Sciences Division. The ditch blocks are necessary to halt overdrainage of the DRSF's sloughs, marshes and wet prairies resulting from the drainage system installed by the previous owner. To date approximately 3000 acres of former wetlands have been reflooded under the program. Work will begin next year on the levees and control structures necessary for restoration of the Levee-8 Marsh.

Discussions were held with DOF regarding improvement of Jim Lake Road and DuPuis Grade. Work will begin this year to upgrade these two roads to acceptable standards for public use.

Trailhead registration data indicates that use of the DRSF hiking trails is continuing to increase as word of their availability spreads. Hiking activity has been recorded for each day of the week with the highest levels on weekends and during the cooler months. Day hikes account for most of the use; however, backpacking is increasing and can be expected to become more popular with the addition of a well at the campsite.

Horseback riding has also increased steadily since the dedication of the equestrian trail system in August of 1990, and the DRSF is rapidly becoming one of the more popular riding areas in the State. An equestrian center off State Road 76 features a restroom and picnic shelter, water and tethering facilities, a corral where horses can be turned out, and a horse barn. Areas are available for tents and self-contained campers.

The hiking and equestrian trails are maintained by the Florida Trail Association and the DuPuis Horsemen's Association, respectively, under separate memorandums of understanding with the DOF. The DOF has recently implemented a user-fee system for the DRSF (exclusive of hunting activities).

April marked the end of the second hunting season on the DRSF. Hunt data compiled by the Commission indicated a slight reduction in the harvest of deer from the previous season. The number of hogs taken from the area was down substantially, but this was to be expected considering the high number that were removed last year. Reduction of the feral hog population to levels necessary for protection of the habitat is one of the objectives of the hunt program, and close monitoring

of post season populations will be undertaken to determine if supplemental measures, such as trapping, will be necessary.

## **LOXAHATCHEE RIVER**

Routine roller-chopping, mowing and road repairs were performed by SOR field personnel on the Reese Tract, south of Indiantown Road. Approximately 268 man-hours were expended on the control of exotic plants and 80 man-hours completing boundary fencing. Restoration of the hydroperiod will begin next year.

Fencing of the property north of Indiantown Road, currently managed by the Department of Natural Resources under an agreement with the District, was completed by the District's contractor.

The Department of Natural Resources as managers of our Loxahatchee Corridor lands, took an active role in persuading Palm Beach County to redesign the Indiantown Road widening project, so as to have less impact on the environmentally sensitive lands near the new road bridge.

The Construction Management Department has executed a contract with Westinghouse Environmental Consultants to begin uncovering the agricultural dump on the east side of the river.

## **SOUTH FORK ST. LUCIE RIVER**

Routine maintenance included fencing and exotic plant control. Approximately 60 acres were prescribed burned by SOR field personnel. A management agreement with Martin County will be drafted in 1992.

## **FISHEATING CREEK**

SOR staff conducted a three-day site inspection with representatives of the The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to assess the environmental resources and recreational potential of the project. Work is continuing on the terms and conditions of a proposed conservation easement with TNC and Lykes Bros. Inc.

## **HICKORY HAMMOCK (MCARTHUR) - KISSIMMEE RIVER**

Turf maintenance, installation of culverts, boundary posting and prescribed burning of 1184 acres were completed by SOR field personnel. Additionally, approximately 200 man-hours were expended on fencing.

Hay harvesting operations began under a contract awarded during the year. Approximately 900 acres of the haying area was consumed by a wildfire accidentally started by the contractor's equipment.

A hiking trail was completed by the Florida Trail Association in the hammock line along the edge of the floodplain. SOR field personnel installed a trailhead off US 98 near the southeast corner of the property, and District carpenters constructed and installed a bulletin board and registration desk. In the future, the trail will become part of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

#### **YATES MARSH (GODOCHIK II) - KISSIMMEE RIVER**

Exotic plant control, roadway maintenance, culvert and fence repair, mowing, and boundary posting was undertaken by SOR field personnel. A livestock-grazing contract was awarded following guidelines established by the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

#### **FARISH - KISSIMMEE RIVER**

A initial assessment of the property was conducted. Posting was completed along the main road, and gates were numbered for future reference. Livestock-grazing is continuing under a leaseback arrangement with the former owner.

#### **GODOCHIK I - KISSIMMEE RIVER**

Routine maintenance, including junk removal, exotic plant control, roller chopping, and turf maintenance was undertaken by SOR staff. Additionally, approximately 190 acres were prescription burned.

#### **KICCO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA- KISSIMMEE RIVER**

Personnel from the Okeechobee Field Station repaired two major washouts in the KICCO Grade. Culverts were installed to prevent similar problems in the future. Prescribed burning operations were conducted on approximately 750 acres by SOR field personnel. Additionally, a new contract was executed covering livestock grazing on the property. The grazing program was developed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Hiking activity on the KICCO section of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) was up during the year, and trailhead registration data indicate that a substantial amount of this increase was attributable to visitors from nearby River Ranch Resort. A brochure covering the portion of the FNST along the Kissimmee River is now available from the District.

Restoration of the Rattlesnake Hammock Marsh appears to be progressing satisfactorily. Water levels behind the new control structure were up throughout most of the year, and there was substantial use of the marsh by waterfowl and wading birds. Many of the woody terrestrial shrubs that invaded the marsh prior to the implementation of the restoration project have declined substantially as a result of the wet conditions.

The second spring gobbler hunt was held on the area in March and April by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The Commission reported that 138 man-days of hunting took place on the area, with hunters harvesting 12 turkeys.

The District has secured the services of a live-on caretaker for the KICCO WMA. The responsibilities of this contract are to provide general observation of the property, maintain the trailhead area and monitor the Rattlesnake Hammock Restoration Area water levels.

#### **KISSIMMEE LAKES WATERSHED (REEDY CREEK SWAMP, LAKE MARION CREEK, WALKER RANCH)**

SOR staff conducted aerial and ground site inspections with representatives from the Planning Department and Environmental Sciences Division to gather information for ongoing water resource and environmental assessments. Preliminary assessments have been completed. A public meeting was held in the Community of Poinciana to determine public support for the acquisition and management of these project areas.

#### **SHINGLE CREEK SWAMP**

District staff has been working with DER, St. Johns Water Management District, and others to develop a plan to utilize the District share of the Orlando Beltway mitigation funds. The District's plan calls for using the funds to acquire land and enhance the hydroperiod on approximately 1,000 acres of swamp.

#### **SAVANNAS**

District staff has attended the Savannas Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (SITAC) meeting for the Savanna State Preserve to help DNR develop a comprehensive master plan for the area. The District donated materials to have the SOR property along Jensen Beach Boulevard fenced by the DNR. An interagency management agreement formally transferring management rights for the District land to the DNR is in process at this time.

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **SUMMARY OF ACQUISITION**

**July, 1990 - June, 1991**

Acquisition from the beginning of the Save Our Rivers program in 1981 through June 1990 totaled 127,398.34 acres at land cost of \$98,342,105.00.

Acquisition during the 1991 Plan period (July 1990 - June 1991) added approximately 25,785 acres at land cost of \$27,455,514. These acquisitions bring The Save Our Rivers program totals for June 30, 1991, to approximately 153,183 acres at land cost of \$109,669,030. (Note: These numbers are subject to slight change as some transactions have not closed.)

This acquisition activity included:

**BIG PINE KEY.** The District completed its two million dollar commitment to the project and currently owns approximately 190 acres. (Note: Lack of surveys has prevented exact determination of acreage.)

**CORKSCREW REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM WATERSHED.** Activity started on this project in both Lee and Collier Counties. 6847.83 acres were purchased and 3,363 acres were approved for acquisition. Total land cost \$6,342,670. In addition, Lee County purchased 3,865 acres at a land cost of \$5,540,000.

**SOUTHERN GLADES (CANAL 111).** Activity continued on this project with the purchase of 523.77 acres and the approval to acquire 577 acres. Total land cost \$957,725.00.

**EAST EVERGLADES.** An agreement has been formulated to donate 17,323 acres to the National Park Service for addition to the Everglades National Park.

**KISSIMMEE RIVER-- LOWER BASIN.** Activity continued on the project with the completed acquisition of 3481.56 acres; and the approval to acquire 35 acres. Total land cost \$6,839,527.00.

**KISSIMMEE CHAIN OF LAKES.** Activity started in 1990 with the acquisition of 2978.64 acres. In January to June 1991 another 31.71 acres were acquired and 1,735.33 acres approved for final closing agreements. Total land cost \$5,354,527.00.

**SAVANNAS.** The District assisted this Department of Natural Resources C.A.R.L. project through the purchase of a key 77.13 acre tract. Total land cost \$3,100,000. (Note: \$1,000,000 of the purchase price provided by Martin County.)

**WATER CONSERVATION AREAS.** Continuing activity on this project added 5,822.21 acres at a land cost of \$1,412,252.00.

**SAVE OUR RIVERS ACQUISITION/ACTIVITY**  
**JULY 1990 - JUNE 1991**

		Acres	Land Cost
1990 Totals	June - December	12,349.00	\$15,387,460.00
1991	January - June		
	<u>Closed</u>		
KR	Prescott	1,169.66	1,878,800.00
KR	Prescott (E)	90.98	44,000.00
C-111	Beame	523.77	371,900.00
WCA	Ewing	160.00	16,800.00
WCA	Judi, Inc.	5,532.21	1,383,052.50
KCOL	McNamara (E)	31.71	32,207.00
BPK	Cook	0.125	4,500.00
BPK	Jasper	1.00	5,000.00
BPK	Clayton	2.00	10,000.00
BPK	Stover	1.25	4,500.00
BPK	Edwards	0.125	4,500.00
BPK	Stuart	1.00	17,700.00
BPK	Robertson	1.00	17,000.00
BPK	Mitchell	1.33	22,000.00
BPK	Boss	76.210	500,000.00
BPK	Johnston	1.00	17,500.00
BPK	Taylor	1.00	12,000.00
<i>Sub Total</i>		<u>7,594.370</u>	<u>4,341,459.50</u>



**SAVE OUR RIVERS ACQUISITION/ACTIVITY**  
**JULY 1990 - JUNE 1991**

		Acres	Land Cost
	<u>Approved but not Closed</u>		
KCOL	Overstreet	1,732.98	1,835,000.00
KR	River Ranch (Trade to SFWMD) To River Ranch	67.75 [80.70]	0
KCOL	Rawn (E)	2.35	27,000.00
KR	Barker	35.00	122,600.00
CREW	Fisch	3,527.00	1,975,120.00
C-111	Risenberger	557.00	585,175.00
	<i>Sub Total</i>	5,841.28	4,544,945.00
	<i>Plus Closed</i>	7,594.37	4,341,459.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1991 - Jan-June</b>	<b><u>13,435.67</u></b>	<b><u>8,886,404.50</u></b>



**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
SAVE OUR RIVERS PROGRAM**

**Land Acquisition Summary 1981 - 1991**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Description/Acres Acquired</b>	<b>Land Cost</b>
<b>1981</b>	<b>Legislation Enacted</b>	
<b>1982</b>	<b>District Review &amp; Analysis</b>	
<b>1983</b>	<b>35,579.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,700,744.00</b>
<b>1984</b>	<b>5,178.51</b>	<b>4,965,000.00</b>
<b>1985</b>	<b>23,269.99</b>	<b>9,655,721.00</b>
<b>1986</b>	<b>25,068.11</b>	<b>33,172,000.79</b>
<b>1987</b>	<b>1,911.02</b>	<b>5,868,245.00</b>
<b>1988</b>	<b>31,719.43</b>	<b>21,924,604.00</b>
<b>1989</b>	<b>3,841.97</b>	<b>1,681,600.00</b>
<b>1990</b>	<b>13,179.32</b>	<b>16,814,710.28</b>
<b><i>Sub-Total</i></b>	<b><u>139,747.35</u></b>	<b><u>100,782,625.07</u></b>
<b>1991 - Jan-June</b>	<b>13,435.65</b>	<b>8,886,404.50</b>
<b><i>Ten Year Total</i></b>	<b><u>153,183.00</u></b>	<b><u>\$109,669,029.57</u></b>

# 1992 ACQUISITION PLAN

The 1992 SOR Five-Year Plan reflects a conservative outlook on acquisition funding. The plan utilizes only two years of Preservation 2000 funding, but does not assure any Preservation 2000 funds beyond that approved by the 1990 and 1991 legislature. The plan also assumes that the Water Management Land Trust Fund revenues will remain fixed at \$11,000,000 per year, and that SOR management cost will utilize 10% of that income.

For the 1992 SOR Five-Year Plan, the following criteria were utilized to establish the general acquisition priority for qualified SOR projects.

## 1. Standing on the District Strategic Plan

SOR land acquisition is an integral element of the District's overall strategic plan for resource management. The priority of SOR land acquisition needs, as established by the Plan, must be directly translated to the SOR acquisition priority.

## 2. Potential for Resource Loss

Continued development activity in and around identified SOR projects raises concerns about loss of resource values for these projects if they are not protected by outright purchase or conservation easements. The Departments of Planning and Regulation, as well as local governments, are consulted annually as to the trend in development pressures around various SOR projects.

## 3. Potential for Cooperative Acquisitions

Several SOR projects are potentially qualified for cost sharing with other state and local agencies. Other projects are located in counties with land acquisition programs. Projects that can be acquired and/or managed with cost-sharing programs and remain consistent with SOR objectives receive priority consideration. It is important to establish the intent of the potential partner before granting a priority status.

## 4. Disposition of Owner(s)

The expressed willingness of the owner(s) of specific critical tracts within an SOR project is a factor in the acquisition priority consideration. Conversely, well managed lands owned by private interests reluctant

to sell are given a low priority, even if the resource values are high.

Although this priority analysis should apply to SOR projects, it may be necessary to single out certain key tracts within a project as the critical factor for a priority; that is, the status or priority of certain core tracts within a project may determine the priority of the overall project. In these cases, the commitment of funds to the project should be to acquire the core pieces rather than the less critical (lower priority) tracts.

The Priority Acquisition Plan was developed using these criteria. The acquisition resources of the District will be specifically directed to accomplish this plan. However, any qualified SOR project may be considered for acquisition during the life of this plan as conditions and circumstances warrant.

The objective of the Save Our Rivers program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources. The Five-Year Plan shows projects that have been determined to meet the Save Our Rivers objectives. Projects have been submitted from a variety of sources and analyzed through the District Save Our Rivers matrix. However, financial and other constraints may not allow acquisition of all lands included in the Five-Year Plan.

The Five-Year Plan indicates to local governments that certain lands within their jurisdiction meet the criteria for Save Our Rivers project consideration. Budget, or other considerations, may constrain the acquisition of these lands. Accordingly, local governments should use the Five-Year Plan as only one of the many criteria in making land use planning evaluations.

**SAVE OUR RIVERS  
1992 FIVE YEAR ACQUISITION PLAN  
PRIORITY PROJECTS**

PROJECT	INCLUDED IN STRATEGIC PLAN	POTENTIAL FOR RESOURCE LOSS	COOPERATIVE ACQUISITION	WILLINGNESS TO SELL	P-2000 CRITERIA
Kissimmee KCOL	Yes	L			4, 6
WCA	Yes	L			4, 6
CREW	Yes	M	CARL Lee County		1, 4, 6
Six Mile Cypress II	No	M	Lee County		4, 6
Southern Glades (C-111)	Yes	L		Yes	6
Shingle Creek	Yes	M	Mitigation		4, 6
Kissimmee Lakes Watershed (Lake Marion Creek, Reedy Creek, Walker Ranch)	Yes	M			4, 6
Pal-Mar	Yes	M	Martin		1, 6
Loxahatchee River	No	H	Palm Beach Co.		1, 3, 6
Paradise Run	No	M			6
Stormwater Treatment Areas	Yes	L	Special Taxing District	Yes	6

**ASSUMPTIONS:**

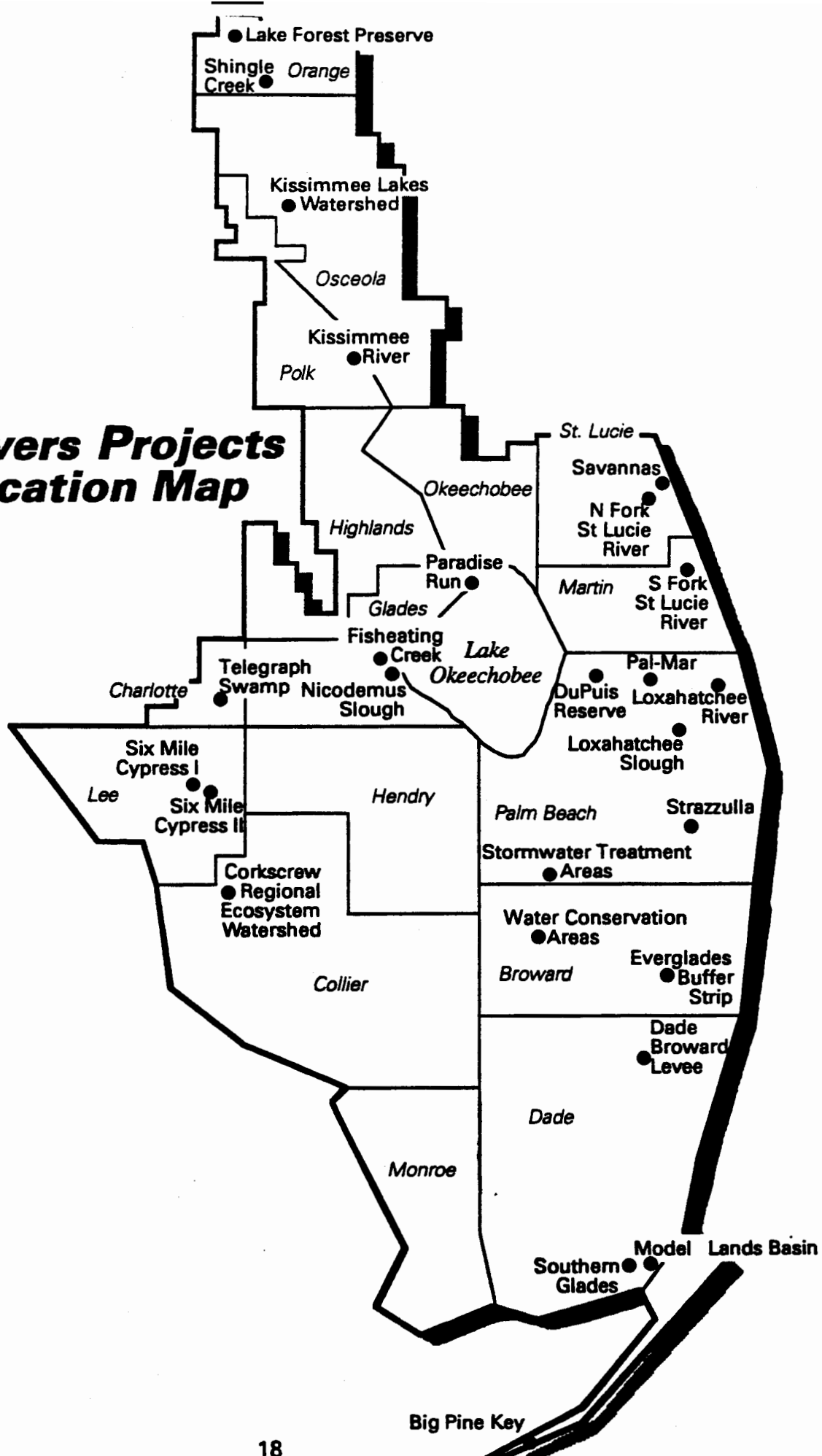
1. P-2000 and SOR doc. stamps generate \$30,000,000/year.
2. There are sufficient staff resources to execute the program.

**P-2000 CRITERIA:**

- 1 - Imminent danger of development
- 2 - Imminent danger of subdivision
- 3 - High rate of appreciation
- 4 - Groundwater recharge
- 5 - Purchase at 80% of appraised value
- 6 - Serves/Protects endangered habitat/species

**Note:** Pursuant to Governing Board Policy, any SOR/P2000 funds used to purchase lands in the Everglades Buffer Strip will be reimbursed from Ad Valorem taxes, at a later date.

# Save Our Rivers Projects General Location Map





*Kissimmee*

## **Priority Projects**

Projects included in the FIVE YEAR PLAN will not necessarily be acquired. Acquisition is dependent upon the level of funding and a number of priority factors (see Policies 4.100, 5.001).

## *LAND FOR WATERS' SAKE*

*The goal of the Save Our Rivers Program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources.*

*Projects may be submitted by nearly any interested party. These lands are analyzed to determine the extent that each project meets the program objectives.*

*Projects selected by the Land Selection Committee and the Governing Board are incorporated into the Five-Year Plan, updated annually.*

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **CORKSCREW REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM WATERSHED**

<b>Counties:</b>	<b>Lee and Collier</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>50,000 Acres *</b>
<b>Total Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>14,076**</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$12,086,390</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$859</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$16 Million</b>

\* Includes Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary (10,500 ac.)

\*\* Lee Co. acquired 3,865 ac. at a cost of \$5,540,000

### **1. General Description**

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed is a generic name for a vast project covering nearly 50,000 acres in Lee and Collier Counties. National Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is included within the project area; however, these lands will not be purchased. In 1991, the District Governing Board expanded the project by approximately 7,300 acres. The additional lands will allow the CREW project to connect with Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

In 1991, more than 14,000 acres were purchased by the District and Lee County. The headwaters to Flintpen Strand were acquired by Lee County. Corkscrew Marsh, the major headwaters in Collier County, were purchased by the District. Ownership of all lands purchased by Lee County will be either sold or donated to the District.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

A multi-agency planning team has developed a conceptual plan that addresses management needs and agency responsibilities. The major participating agencies are Lee County, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Florida Division of

Forestry, National Audubon Society, and the District.

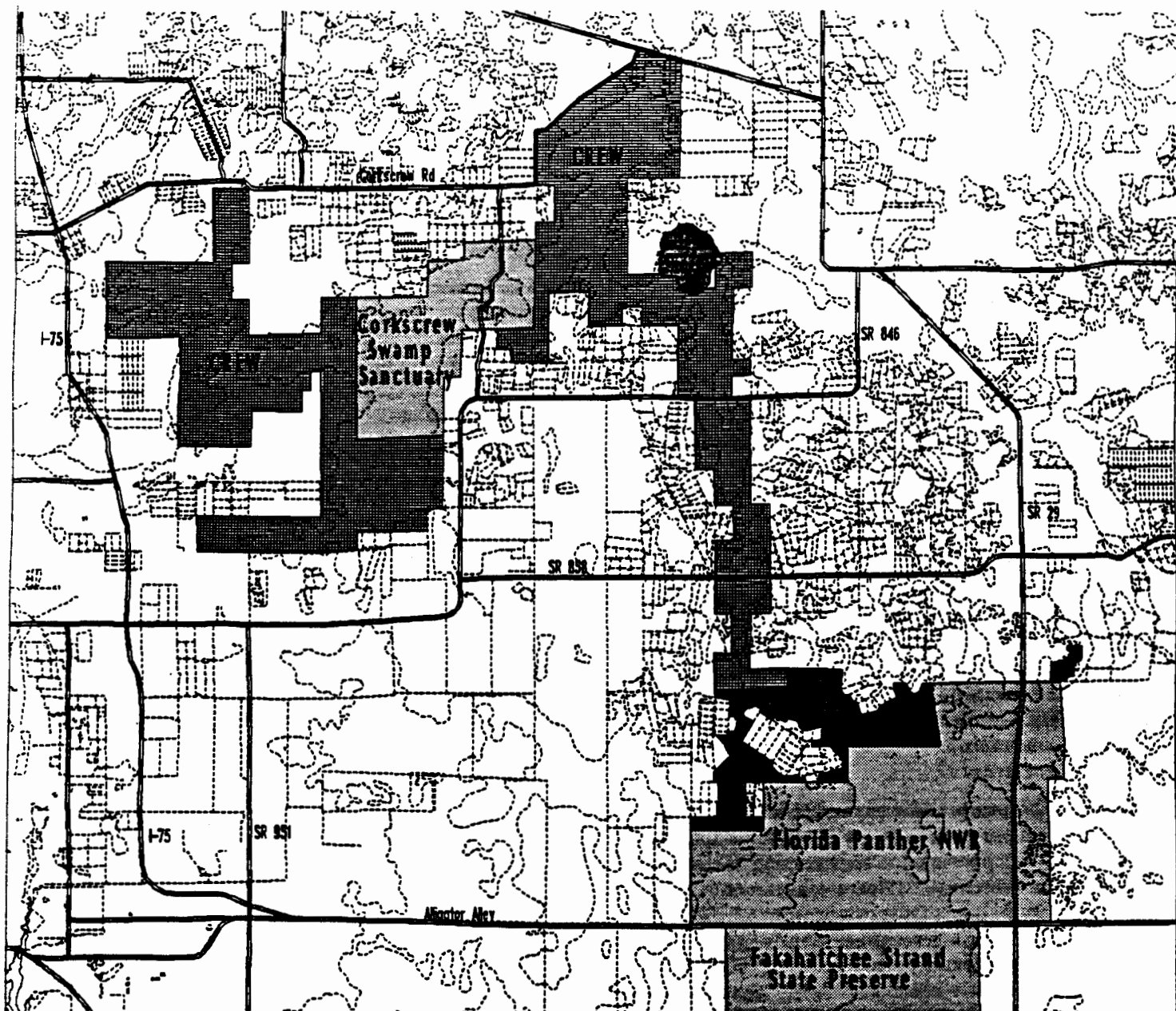
A year long water resources study will map the watershed, evaluate the existing water resources and the water supply potential for the region. The study will conduct an assessment of the wetland resources, including the water requirements of the natural system.




#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

An interim management plan has been implemented using the Game Commission reservist program. These volunteers have had several field days which were devoted to posting signage, identifying property boundaries, and beginning preliminary resource inventories. Lee County Division of Land Management field crews have treated exotics in Flintpen Strand. SOR land managers have identified several work areas and at least two full weeks of field time has been allocated for FY 92.

#### **C. Public Recreation:**

Recreational opportunities are being explored in the conceptual management plan. In the coming year, SOR staff and Florida Trail Association volunteers will begin planning and mapping a series of hiking trails.



-  Potential Acquisition Area  
14,000 acres acquired  
to date
-  1992 Project Addition
-  Other Conservations  
Area



## Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed

0 2 4 6 8 10 MILES



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **KISSIMMEE RIVER**

**Counties:** Osceola, Polk, Okeechobee  
and Highlands

**Total Project Area:** 1 77,000 Acres

**Acres Acquired:** 24,000 Acres

**Land Cost:** \$26,500,000

**Per Acre Cost:** \$1,100

**Acres Remaining:** 1 64,000 Acres

**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$69,000,000

### **1. General Description**

The project area covers nearly 90,000 acres in both the upper basin and the lower basin. More than 57,000 acres in the lower basin represents the historic flood plain of the Kissimmee River. This land is necessary for the restoration of the river under the Governor's Save Our Everglades program. In the lower basin more than 23,000 acres have been acquired, and 1,000 acres placed under easement agreements, through the Save Our Rivers Program. In addition, more than 2,000 acres is in non-SOR SFWMD ownership, more than 2,000 acres covered by non-SOR easements, 4,000 acres in State and Federal ownership, and more than 2,500 acres in Federal easements.

In 1991, the project was expanded to include 20,000 acres of the shoreline of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes in the upper basin. This portion of the project is to acquire fee title or flowage easements to allow stages in these lakes to be raised from 52.5' NGVD to 54' NGVD. It is our understanding that the Sovereign Ownership line is 53.1' NGVD. The additional water is needed to "drive" the restoration project by providing year-round flow. In the upper basin, nearly 4,000 acres have been acquired, more than 800 acres placed under easement, and almost 1,500 acres placed in State ownership.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

All of the attributes of free-flowing rivers, including attenuation of flood discharges, providing year-round base flows, water quality improvement and wildlife habitat, were lost when Canal 38 was

excavated. District ownership of the historic flood plain is necessary if restoration of the river is to be accomplished.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The Kissimmee River stretched over 98 miles between Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee. With the Construction of Canal 38, 98 miles of the River became a 56 mile straight line with remnant oxbows in various places. More than 35,000 acres of wetlands were altered by the construction. The proposed restoration alternative will reestablish pre-channelization hydrologic characteristics along 52 miles of river channel and 24,000 acres of flood plain.

There is additional potential in portions of the river other than the targeted restoration. In 1990, a proposed restoration of a slough in Rattlesnake Hammock was completed. This project has resulted in reflooding nearly 500 acres of lands that were previously wetlands.

### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

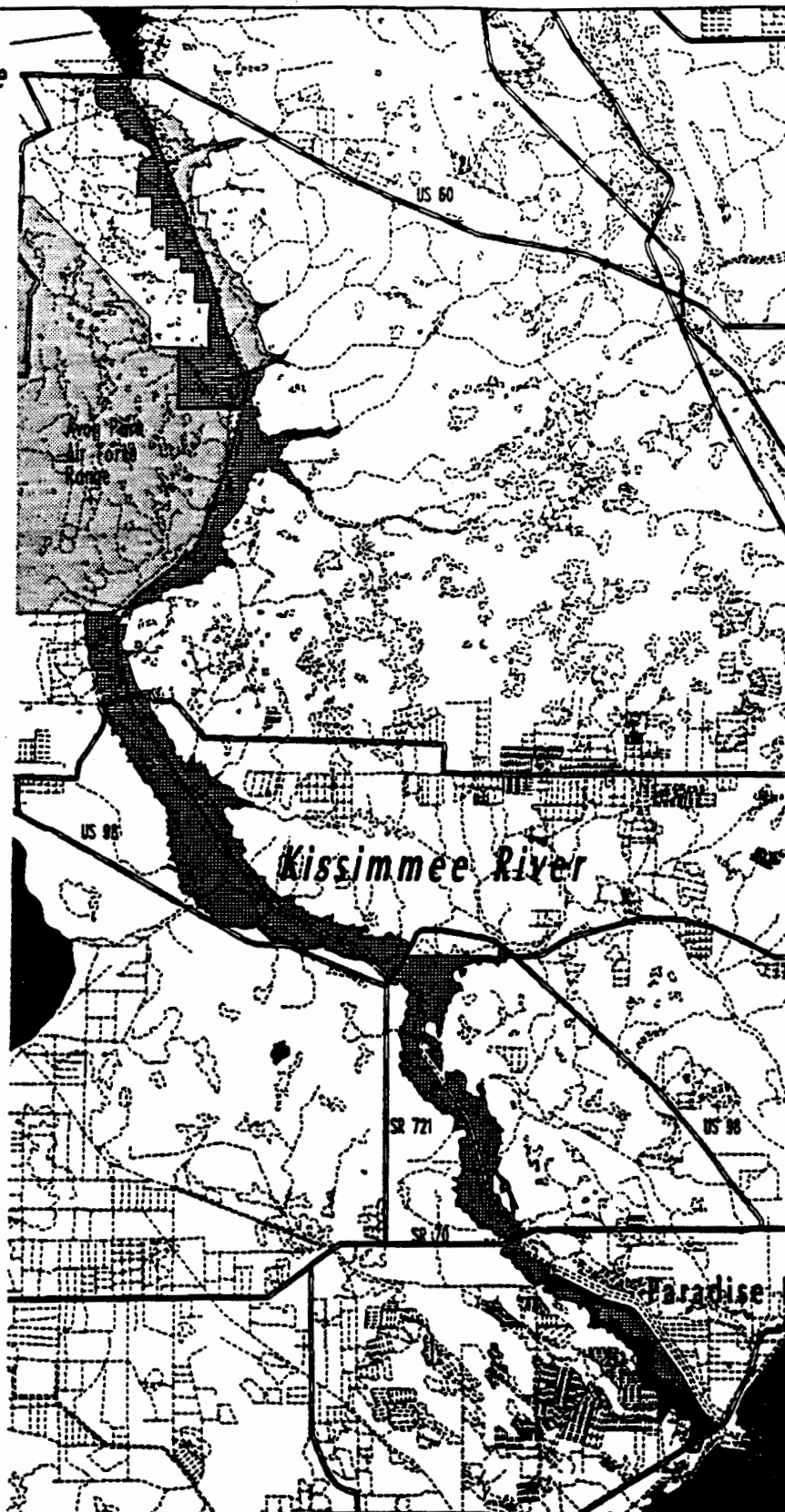
Management of lands in the Kissimmee Valley will be time and manpower intensive. Prior to beginning restoration, control of shrubs and exotic vegetation could be difficult. Blocking the numerous drainage ways and restoring sheetflow into the flood plain will be a major task. Even if other organizations are willing to manage the lands, the District will still be responsible for hydrologic restoration. Given the size of the project, this will be a large and ongoing venture.

### **5. Public Recreation:**

Existing recreational activities consist primarily of power boating and fishing in Canal 38, and those oxbows of the river that were not cut off as a result of project construction. There are opportunities for bank fishing and picnicking at several access sites along the river. Improvement of flows into the river oxbows will increase the opportunities for fishing, canoeing, nature observation and waterfowl hunting. Thirty-six (36) miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail were dedicated in June at a joint ceremony held by the District, the Florida Trail Association (FTA), the USDA Forest Service, and the Avon Park Air Force Range. Recently, a new section of trail on the McArthur Ranch tract was completed by the District and FTA. Additional sections of the trail will be developed as contiguous parcels of land are acquired by the District. The long-range plan is to extend the trail the full length of the river.

*<sup>1</sup> Approximate sizes  
Includes entire lower basin acreage*

Lake  
Kissimmee



- SOR Project
- Other Conservation Area



Kissimmee River

5 0 5 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **KISSIMMEE RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT**

**Counties:** Osceola, Polk, Okeechobee,  
and Highlands

**Total Project Area:**

Kissimmee Lakes 20,000 Acres

**Kissimmee River**

Pool A	15,575
Pool B	15,786
Pool C	8,615
Pool D	15,568
Pool E	<u>12,994</u>

88,000 (Rounded)

**Total Acres Acquired:**

Kissimmee Lakes 4,745 Acres

Kissimmee River 24,000 Acres <sup>(1)</sup>

**Land Costs:** \$26,500,000

**Average Per Acre Cost:** \$1,100

**Acres Remaining** 64,000 <sup>(1)</sup>

**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$69,000,000

<sup>(1)</sup> Does not include land owned by other governmental programs.

### **1. General Description**

The Kissimmee Restoration Project is an ecological restoration project. Restoration of the pre-canal system is the primary project objective. The project has been designed to meet environmental restoration goals. Flood control provisions are to be maintained through land purchase, flowage easements and/or structural modifications and improvements. The Kissimmee Basin extends from Orlando to Lake Okeechobee. The Upper Basin encompasses approximately 1,595 square miles. The northern portion encompasses many lakes. The largest lake, Lake Kissimmee, empties into the Kissimmee River.

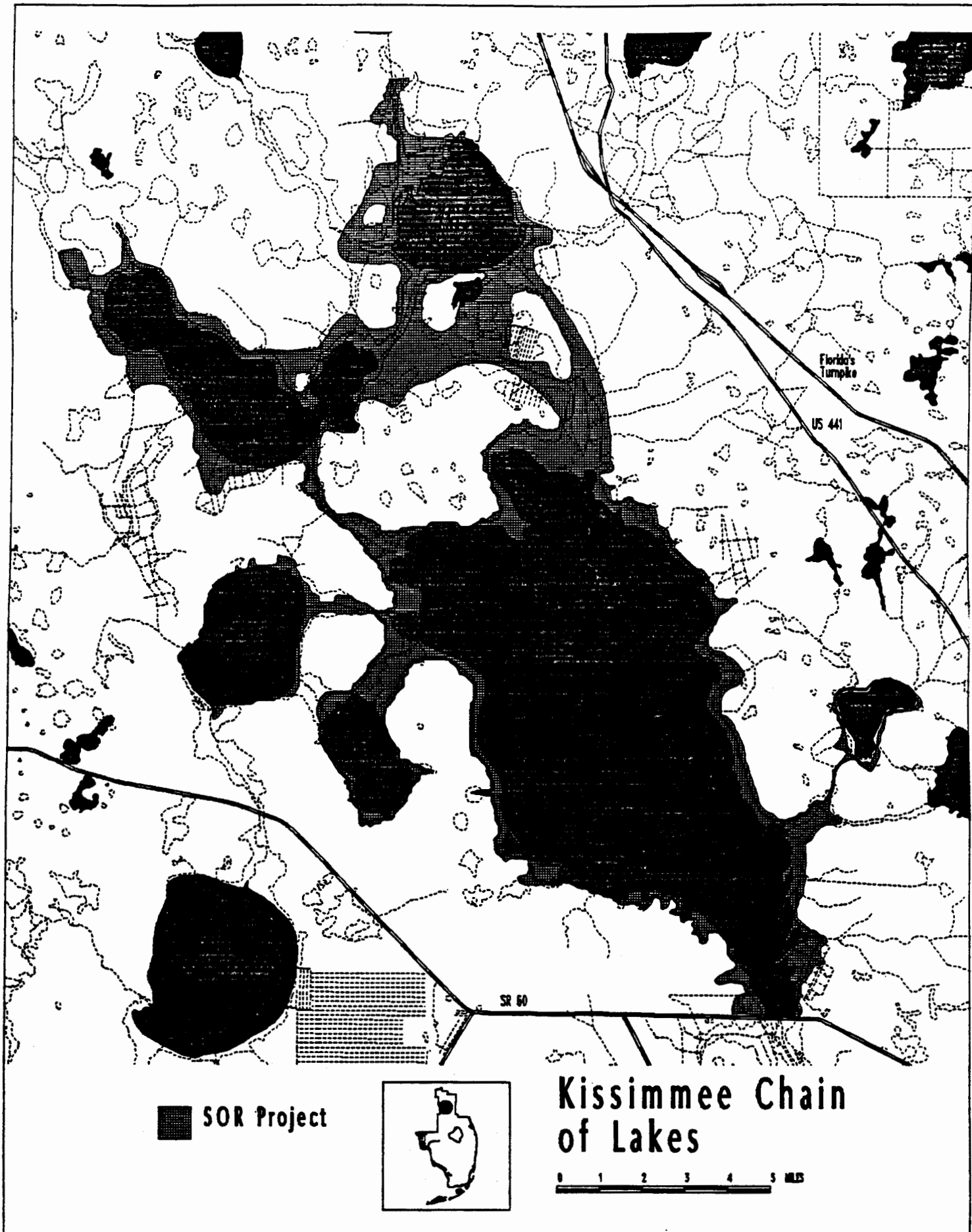
The Lower Basin that flows into the Kissimmee River encompasses approximately 684 square miles. The project area includes approximately 99,500 acres. To date, approximately 24,000 acres have been acquired with SOR/P2000 funds. Over 57,000 acres represents the historic floodplain of the Kissimmee River. This land is necessary under the Governor's Save Our Everglades Program. The Corps of Engineers has been directed by Congress to prepare a feasibility report by April 1, 1992. The SFWMD will be acting as local sponsor to the Corps of Engineers in carrying out the restoration efforts of the Kissimmee River. As a local sponsor, the SFWMD will secure and certify appropriate land interest to carry out the Kissimmee Restoration Project.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

All of the attributes of free-flowing rivers, including attenuation of flood discharges, providing year round base flows, water quality improvement and wildlife habitat, were lost when Canal 38 was excavated. District ownership of the historic floodplain is necessary if restoration of the river is to be accomplished.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Construction of water control structures in Rattlesnake Hammock were completed in 1990. Fluctuations of water levels within the flooded slough will result in the reflooding of 130-565 acres of floodplain. Hydrologic studies of other tributaries presently are being performed. Future plans may be developed which will reflood additional lands. Level II Backfilling will require filling in 25-30 continuous miles of canal resulting in the restoration of the ecological integrity of about 50 square miles of river ecosystem.



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **KISSIMMEE LAKES WATERSHED**

**County:** Polk and Osceola  
**Total Project Area:** 58,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$53,000,000  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

The project area includes Walker Ranch and a substantial portion of the Reedy Creek and Lake Marion Creek drainage basins. Walker Ranch encompasses approximately 8,500 acres in Osceola and Polk Counties and borders on Lake Russell, Reedy Creek and Lake Hatchineha. The property contains expanses of improved pasture, pine flatwoods, bay swamp, wet prairies and scattered patches of xeric oak.

Reedy Creek Swamp is an extensive area of mixed hardwood/cypress swamp running for nearly 25 miles through western Osceola County, from the boundary of the Reedy Creek Improvement District, to Cypress Lake. It includes the Huckleberry Islands and totals more than 30,000 acres.

Lake Marion Creek is located in Polk County and flows from Lake Marion north and then southeasterly to Lake Hatchineha. The project area totals approximately 17,300 acres, 3,800 acres of which are within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). It includes the 1,324 acre Horse Creek Scrub, designated for possible acquisition under the CARL program, and the Snell Creek Drainage Basin.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Portions of Walker Ranch lie within the flood plain of Reedy Creek and Lake Hatchineha, and the property's uplands serve as contributory watersheds. Significant recharge to the Floridan Aquifer from the property is likely, although detailed groundwater information is not currently available.

Reedy Creek serves as the headwaters for Lake Russell and Cypress Lake. Peak discharges from major storm events are modified and stored within the swamp and provide year-round base flow for downstream lakes. The flood plain provides recharge to the Surficial Aquifer, which in turn recharges the Intermediate and Floridan Aquifers. The Floridan Aquifer is the major source of groundwater for large-scale wellfield development in the area, and the Surficial and Intermediate Aquifers provide water for individual, domestic and small-scale irrigation use.

Wetlands comprise approximately 50% of the Lake Marion Creek portion of the project, and most are within the 100 year flood plain. The area consists of two distinct physiographic regions - the Lake Wales Ridge and the Osceola Plain. Contained within the Lake Wales Ridge and the Osceola Plain. The area is of critical importance to the recharge of the Floridan Aquifer because the sand allows water to infiltrate, rather than run off, and the many sinkholes and sinkhole lakes provide a more direct route for water to enter the aquifer. The water quality of Lake Marion is very good, and the lake serves as the headwaters for Lake Marion Creek. Snell and Lake Marion Creek provide a constant supply of high quality water to Lake Hatchineha which in turn discharges to Lake Kissimmee, the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee. All three lakes are priority water bodies under the SWIM Program.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Walker Ranch contains a variety of plant communities that provide valuable wildlife habitat. An extensive wildlife corridor exists between Lake Hatchineha and Reedy Creek Swamp that includes upland habitat utilized by terrestrial species. Several endangered species, including wood storks, bald eagles, and scrub jays nest and feed on the property. Some plugging of ditches and swales would be required to offset the effects of drainage related to the ranching operation. Security measures would be required to prevent unauthorized public access and poaching.

Reedy Creek Swamp has been fairly well protected due to its large size and inaccessibility. Unless high density urban encroachments or damaging silvicultural operations are permitted in the future, the swamp should be able to buffer itself. Exotic vegetation is not a problem at this time, and it does not appear that hydrologic restoration will be necessary. Security and poaching may be a problem due to the extended boundary and the close proximity of paved roads.

The Lake Marion Creek properties have a number habitat types, including riverine swamps, isolated marshes, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub. Several rare, threatened and endangered species inhabit the basin, including bald eagles, scrub jays, squirrels and gopher tortoises. The natural habitats within the Lake Marion Creek area are generally in good condition although some scrub areas have been destroyed through land development activities. Exotic vegetation is not a problem, and hydrologic vegetation will not be a major requirement. The size of the property and the deep swamps allow the interior portions to remain buffered from activities along the ridge. A security program will be required to prevent unauthorized activities.

#### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

A fire regime necessary for a healthy mixed pine community has been maintained on Walker Ranch, and heavy fuel loads are not present. This reduces the threat of wildfire and will allow managers to concentrate on prescribed fire for habitat management. Exotic vegetation is not a problem on the ranch at this time. Fencing and posting will be required.

Intensive habitat management practices will not be required for Reedy Creek due to the large size and density of the swamp; however, some exotic control and prescribed burning may be necessary on upland tracts.

Prescribed burning will be required to manage properly the scrub and related upland habitats associated with the Lake Marion Creek portion of the project. Some silvicultural practices may be desirable.

Polk County has indicated a willingness to participate in the management of public use, and the Nature Conservancy has agreed to manage the Horse Creek Scrub.

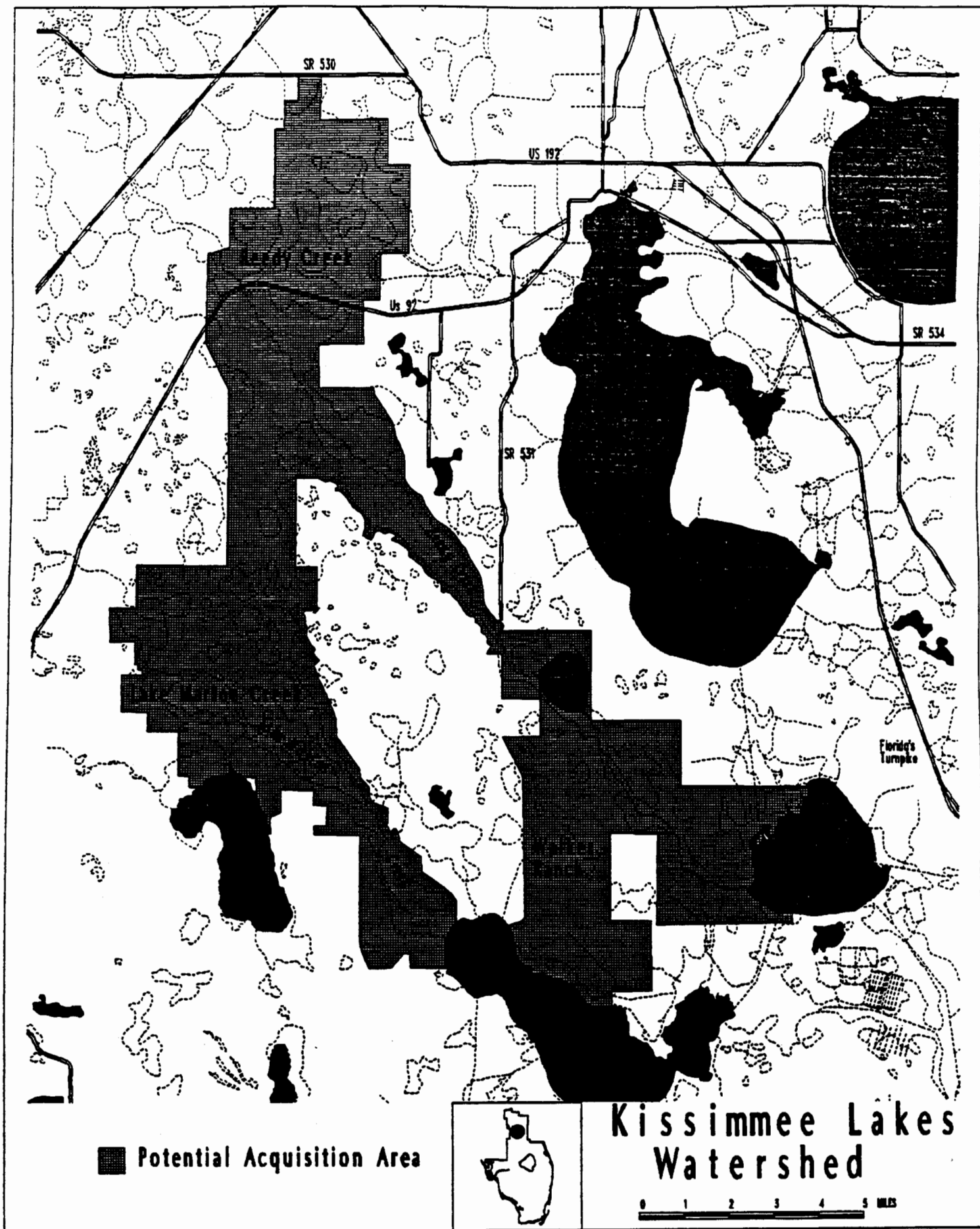
#### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Walker Ranch would be suited to a variety of outdoor recreational activities, including hiking, bird watching, camping, fishing, hunting and photography. It would be accessible from State Road 531 (Pleasant Hill Road) and by water from Lake Hatchineha and Reedy Creek. Management of the tract, together with the adjacent Candler property, as a wildlife and environmental area, by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission is a possibility.

Reedy Creek could become a popular canoeing area with selective removal of deadfalls and overhanging growth from the creek. Some periodic aquatic weed control may also be necessary. The swamp is very dense and access would be limited primarily to canoes and foot traffic. An interpretive boardwalk, nature trail and an environmental education center operated by the Osceola County School Board are located on the east side of the creek off Poinciana Boulevard. A system of footpaths could be developed to provide opportunities for hiking, nature observation and photography. A multi-agency cooperative effort will be necessary to manage this extensive system properly.

Portions of Lake Marion Creek are currently accessible to fishermen, and travel by canoe is possible during high-water conditions. Selective clearing of deadfalls and overhanging growth and the installation of trail markers would facilitate canoeing. A system of footpaths within the swamp corridor and adjacent areas of scrub and flatwoods would facilitate access to the property for hiking, nature observation and photography.





## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **LOXAHATCHEE RIVER**

<b>Counties:</b>	<b>Martin and Palm Beach</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>1,547 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>1,461</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$7,020,968</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$4,805</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>461</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>

### **1. General Description**

This project includes the historic flood plain of the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, a National Wild and Scenic River.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition**

The District has been working closely with the Florida Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Palm Beach County, and a variety of local agencies and interest groups on plans to preserve and protect the Loxahatchee River and a major portion of its headwaters (Loxahatchee Slough). Extensive studies on the water supply and drainage requirements of the Loxahatchee River Basin have been completed. The latter work has facilitated the restoration and maintenance of base flows to the Northwest Fork and will help to reduce the frequency of discharge at Structure 46, which flows into the North Fork of the river and has caused downstream erosion and siltation problems in the past. In combination with other measures, the enhancement of flows to the Northwest Fork should help to stem the progress of the saltwater front which has advanced upstream in recent years, resulting in heavy mortality of bald cypress along the river.

The District is proceeding with hydrologic, engineering, and environmental studies necessary to restore the natural water levels and drainage for the lands south of Indiantown Road.

### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner**

The District and DNR are working to implement the Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, which was prepared in 1985 as a requirement for inclusion of this portion of the river in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The District has purchased most of the private lands along the Northwest Fork and efforts have been made to post the properties, repair fences and gates, remove trash and debris, and otherwise bring them up to safe and acceptable conditions. Lands north of Indiantown Road (State Road 706) are being managed by DNR, in conjunction with Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Lands south of the highway will be managed by Palm Beach County under a separate agreement with the District. Management activities include law enforcement, prescribed burning, exotic species control, public-use regulation, development of hiking trails, and interpretive programs. In general, the purpose is to carry out the intent of the Management Plan.

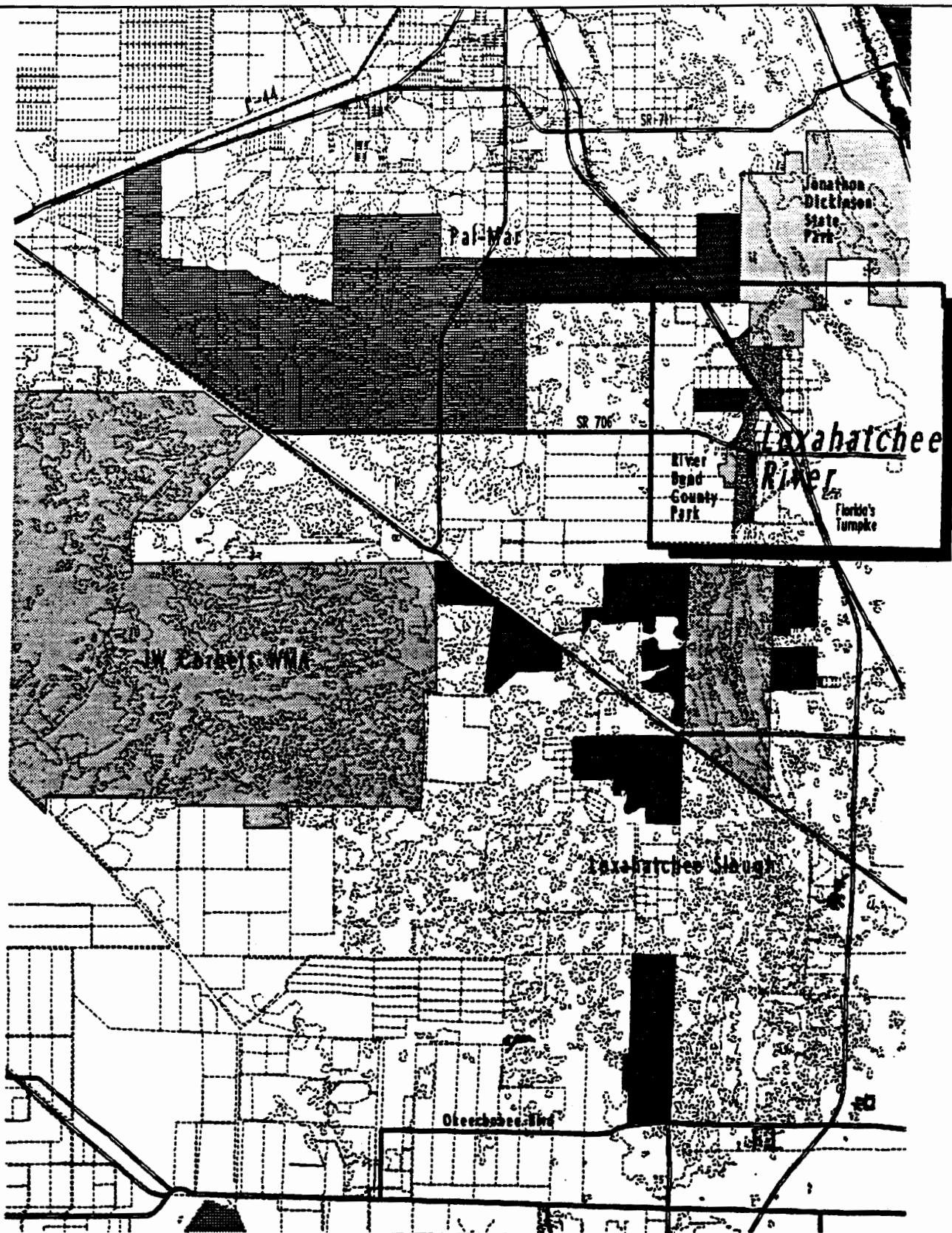
### **C. Public Recreation**





The Loxahatchee River has become a popular canoe trail in recent years. The number of canoeists has increased so dramatically that severe overcrowding is not uncommon on peak days. Concerned about damage to fragile plant species and the maintenance of a quality outdoor experience, DNR is working with Palm Beach County and local livery operators to identify a daily carrying capacity for the river and to implement appropriate user regulations.

Fishing and powerboating is mainly confined to the lower reaches of the river; however, boaters frequently travel upriver to the Trapper Nelson site. A No Wake Zone has been established by DNR in an attempt to control erosion and avoid conflicts between boaters and canoeists.

In the future, Public-use management will concentrate on providing opportunities for non-consumptive recreational pursuits, such as hiking, nature appreciation and photography, through the provision of interpretive sites, boardwalks, and footpaths. Palm Beach County is considering the development of a campground and interpretive center in its plans for Riverbend Park. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Florida Trail Association regarding the development of a future major connector trail that would link Jonathan Dickinson State Park to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail that surrounds Lake Okeechobee.





- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Potential Acquisition Area |  Acquired to Date        |
|  1992 Addition              |  Other Conservation Area |



## Loxahatchee River

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

# *Save Our Rivers Project*

## **PAL-MAR**

**Counties:** Palm Beach and Martin  
**Total Project Area:** 27,500 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$45.5 Million  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

Pal-Mar is located in Palm Beach and Martin Counties, east of J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA). In 1991, the District Governing Board approved the addition of 4500 acres to the project. The addition includes those lands which separate Pal-Mar from Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Acquisition of the addition would form an extensive wildlife corridor connecting J.D. State Park, Pal-Mar, Corbett W.M.A., and DuPuis State Forest.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

The extensive wetlands in this project provide significant conservation of surface water resources. The aquifer under the Pal-Mar area may be expected to have slow recharge due to 15-25 feet of confining sands near the surface. The estimated transmissivity shows the aquifer is adequate for small-scale development and individual use.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Pal-Mar contains the largest concentration of contiguous wetlands in Martin County. Habitat diversity is relatively low, since all that exists are pine flatwoods mixed with wet prairies. However, the quality of habitat is very good. It scores high for connectedness because it is only separated from Corbett Wildlife Management Area by SR 710.

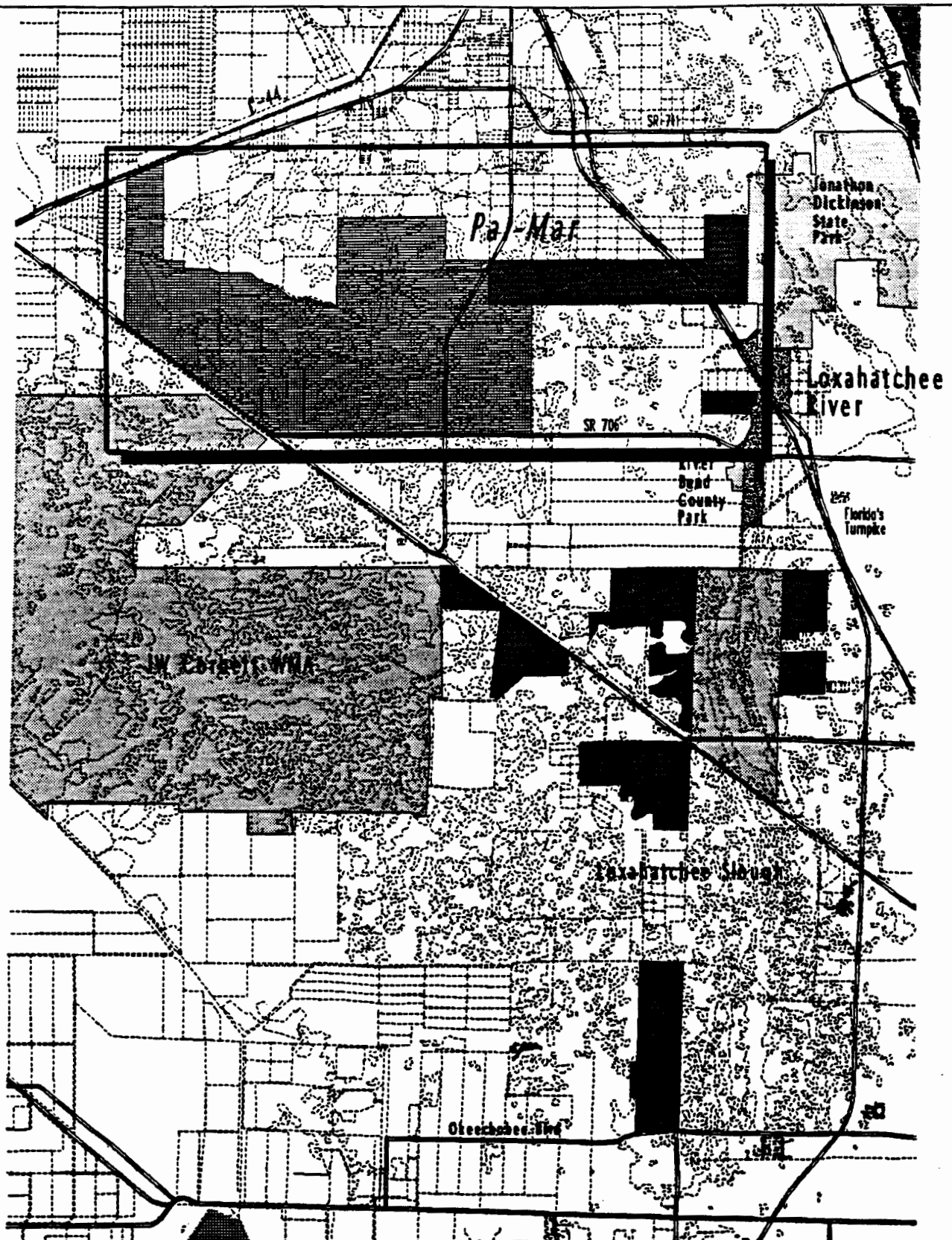
If permits could be obtained to drain the area, the development pressure would be very high since it is sub-divided into many small parcels. If a wellfield were developed in the area, it could have severe environmental impacts, as the confining layer is inadequate to protect wetlands from leakage.





### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

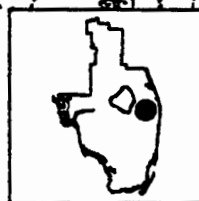
The management of the area would probably depend on the type and amount of public activity allowed. It has been used for some trash dumping and controllable infestations of exotic vegetation are present.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Recreational use would probably be high, particularly if it is used as a wildlife management area like The Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Several deepwater canals remain from earlier attempts to drain the property. Since these have no positive outfall, they provide good fishing.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Potential Acquisition Area |  Acquired to Date        |
|  1992 Addition              |  Other Conservation Area |



Pal-Mar

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# PARADISE RUN

**Counties:** Okeechobee and Glades  
**Total Project Area:** 4,800 Acres  
**Acres Acquired:** 1,406  
**Land Cost:** \$2,287,335  
**Per Acre Cost:** \$1,627  
**Acres Remaining:** 3,395  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$3.9 Million

### **1. General Description**

The project lies west of Canal-38, between Structure-65 E and Lake Okeechobee. Unlike the other pools of the Kissimmee River, Paradise Run will not be reflooded by Level II Backfilling, since it is controlled by the stage in Lake Okeechobee. Remnant river oxbows are still present, although the surrounding land has been drained and is now improved pasture.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Paradise Run has degenerated because it receives no continuous surface water input to allow it to operate as a flowing riverine system. Runoff from adjacent uplands is the primary source of water. Flap-gated structures in the Levee-59 Borrow Canal can discharge water into Paradise Run when stages are high enough, but that does not occur on a regular basis. Paradise Run is physically separated from Canal-38 by a continuous spoil pile. Numerous wetlands still exist adjacent to the old river channel. Although these wetlands suffer from a lack of water, according to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Paradise Run still has high wildlife utilization in the form of water fowl and wading birds.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Since water levels in Paradise Run will not be affected by Kissimmee River restoration, other structural methods will have to be employed to provide a continuous flow of water to the reach. It

appears that several engineering solutions exist. To date, time and funds have not been available to explore fully the various possibilities. Paradise Run suffers from lack of flow, resulting in stagnant conditions and low dissolved oxygen levels. Increased flows would improve greatly the quality of water being discharged to Canal-38 and Lake Okeechobee, as well as increase the habitat diversity gained by a flowing system versus a confined wetland.

### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

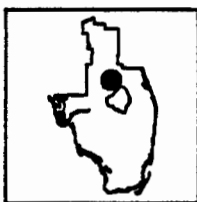
Land management in Paradise Run will be difficult if restoration of the floodplain cannot be accomplished. The present land use is improved pasture and cattle grazing.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

If connected with Canal-38 and constant flows reestablished, there is excellent potential for canoeing, fishing, and wildlife observation. Paradise Run's close proximity to the City of Okeechobee and Lake Okeechobee would make it a popular recreational destination. It is also possible that the Florida National Scenic Trail would be extended through Paradise Run.



- Potential Acquisition Area
- Acquired to Date



Paradise Run





## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# SHINGLE CREEK

**County:** Orange  
**Total Project Area:** 3,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$3 Million  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

Shingle Creek Swamp covers nearly 3,000 acres in Southern Orange County. It is a major receiving body for storm water runoff from areas south and southwest of Orlando. In 1990, the Florida Legislature mandated the South Florida Water Management District to develop a mitigation plan that would offset the impacts of wetland destruction to be caused by construction of the Orlando Beltway. A plan proposing a combination of wetland enhancement and wetland preservation by acquisition was approved by the Department of Environmental Regulation. Water-control structures will be installed in Shingle Creek to extend the period of inundation in Shingle Creek Swamp. Land acquisition will be used to preserve areas not needing enhancement. Orange County presently holds title to nearly 300 acres, which were dedicated to the County as offsite mitigation through the District Surface Water Management Permitting process.

In 1991, the District Governing Board approved the staff recommendation to delete the lands east of Shingle Creek, which had originally been proposed for acquisition. They are not hydraulically connected to Shingle Creek Swamp. These wetlands are being incorporated into residential surface water management systems, and it was felt that post-acquisition management would be very difficult.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Shingle Creek Swamp is largely isolated, except for its connection with Shingle Creek, which flows along the eastern border of the swamp. It plays a very important water management role because it receives the stormwater from most of Valencia

Water Control District (VWCD). The swamp has several wetland habitat types, but it has been divided by two powerline easements and their associated service roads. The swamp plays major roles in flood attenuation and water quality improvement.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

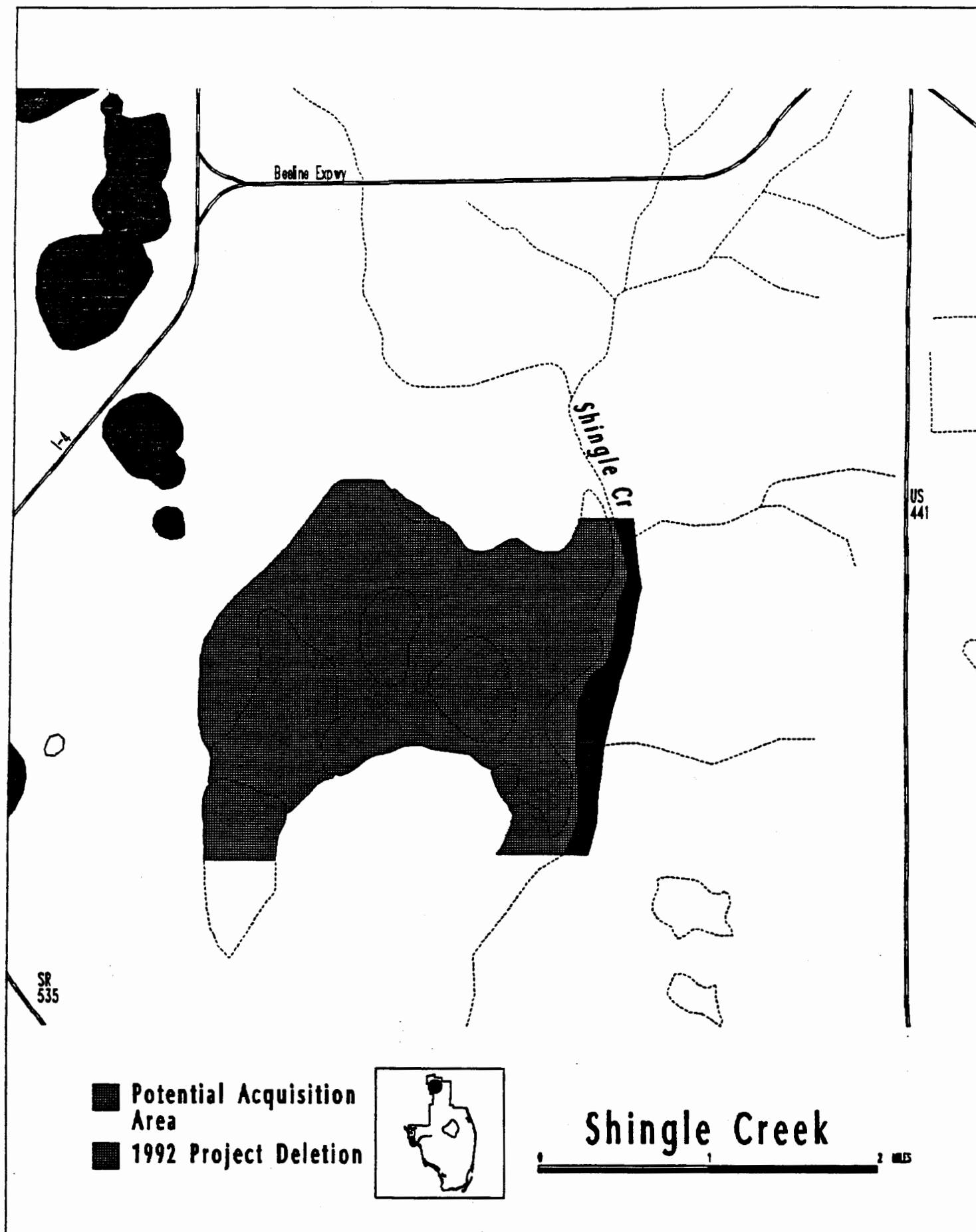
Installation of a low level sheetpile weir in Shingle Creek will extend the period of inundation over approximately 1,000 acres of cypress and mixed hardwood swamp forest. The existing Orlando Utilities Authority transmission line access road serves as a barrier to sheetflow in the swamp. Plans call for discussions with the Utility Authority to restore normal flow patterns. Valencia Water Control District has removed berms along several of their canals, which allows stormwater discharges to be more evenly distributed throughout the swamp.

### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

With the exception of the transmission corridor, the interior of the swamp is undisturbed. No exotic vegetation has been noted during field visits. Both the Southern Connector of the Orlando Beltway, and the Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) corridors will cross portions of the project. After construction it is likely that reforestation and follow-up monitoring will be necessary.

### **5. Public Recreation:**

Canoeing in Shingle Creek is a popular activity. The berm, which was constructed along the west side of the creek during channelization in the 1920's, would be an excellent place for a hiking trail. Additional hiking trails and primitive camping areas could be established on upland islands within the swamp.





## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **SIX MILE CYPRESS II**

**County:** Lee  
**Total Project Area:** 225 Acres <sup>1</sup>  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$2,000,000  
**Number of Owners:** Multiple

### **1. General Description**

Six Mile Cypress Slough occupies approximately 2000 acres in Lee County, southeast of the City of Ft. Myers. It extends from State Road 82 southwesterly for approximately nine miles to Ten Mile Canal. The slough averages 1,500 feet in width. This project (Six Mile Cypress II), locally known as the "North Arm", covers approximately 225 acres and appears to be a transitional arm of the main slough. It extends to the east for approximately two miles and varies in width from 400' - 1000'. The arm collects runoff from the north and areas east of I-75. Box culverts under the interstate direct runoff through the arm and into the main strand of Six Mile Cypress. The slough consists of cypress swamp, interspersed with numerous open ponds. It is fringed with pine flatwoods, transitional hardwoods, wet prairies, and Melaleuca.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Lee County has agreed to develop, operate and maintain the slough as a nature preserve under an agreement with the District. A detailed description of the slough is contained in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Management Plan prepared by the County in 1986. Specific actions to implement the plan are set forth in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Land & Water Management Plan prepared by the County and approved by the District in 1988.

Six Mile Cypress Basin is being studied as part of the Lee County Surface Water Management Master Plan. It will recommend design criteria to prevent further degradation and slough enhancement. A principal objective will be to restore a more natural hydroperiod to aid in wetland revitalization.

The District, through its local Government Assistance Program, is working with Lee County to

develop a Surface Water Management Master Plan for Six Mile Basin. The plan will propose management strategies, such as revitalization of flow ways, to restore flows to the North Arm and main strand of the slough.

Melaleuca and Brazilian pepper are problem exotics that have proliferated in certain portions of the slough. Native vegetation has been completely replaced by Melaleuca in approximately 200 acres. A vigorous eradication/control program involving chemical and mechanical applications is planned to halt the future spread of these species. Reforestation with native species will be undertaken where large stands of exotics are removed.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

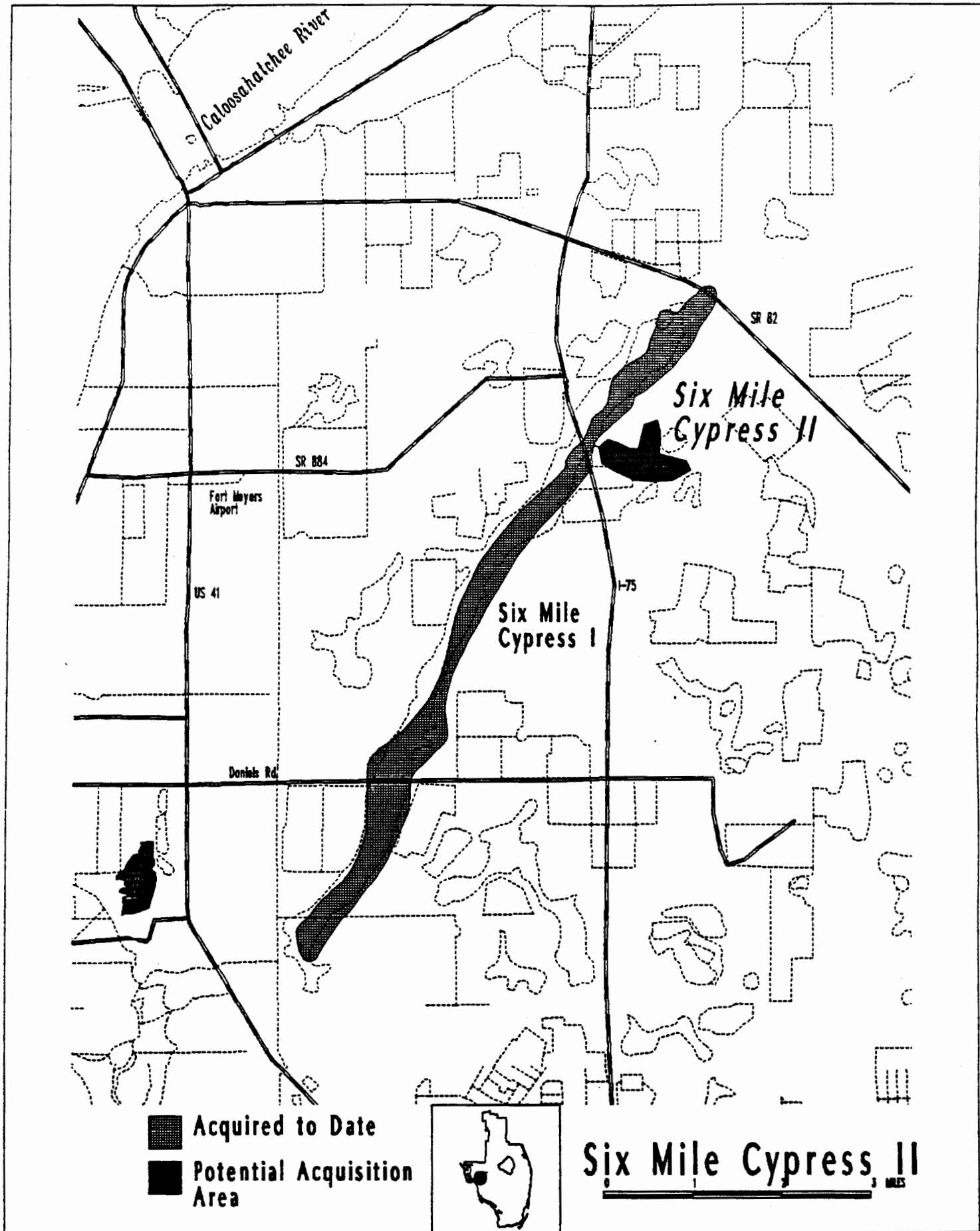
The entire perimeter of the slough is being posted to prevent unauthorized access, and problem areas are being fenced and/or barricaded. Routine patrol will be provided by preserve personnel and the Lee County Sheriff's Department.

A prescribed burning program is proposed for the pine flatwoods north of Penzance Road to maintain the species composition of this community and prevent the buildup of fuels that could result in damaging wildfires. Fire lanes will be constructed to facilitate the burns and to protect sensitive cypress and hardwood areas. Wildfires will be suppressed only when considered necessary to protect adjacent lands and highway travel or when preserve resources would be subject to irreparable damage.

#### **C. Public Recreation:**

The slough has been used informally for both active and passive recreational activities for many years. The continuation of passive activities, such as fishing, picnicking, photography and nature observation, will be encouraged in appropriate locations within the preserve. Interpretive facilities consisting of an elevated boardwalk, covered amphitheater and parking area will be developed by Lee County to enhance visitor appreciation of the preserve. Special programs will be conducted by the Lee County Parks and Recreation Department. The Lee County School Board Department of Environmental Education will continue its past practice of conducting field trips to the slough.

<sup>1</sup> See *Six Mile Cypress I*



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **SOUTHERN GLADES (Canal-111)**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Dade</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>29,643 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>26,720<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$6,889,815</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$258</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>2,896</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$5,400,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>An additional 1,107 acres authorized for purchased but not closed.

### **1. General Description**

The lands in this project lie adjacent to the Canal-111 (Aerojet Canal), east of Everglades National Park, west of U.S. Highway 1, and south of SR 27. The project will benefit the flow of water into Everglades National Park and Northeast Florida Bay.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities**

#### **A. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

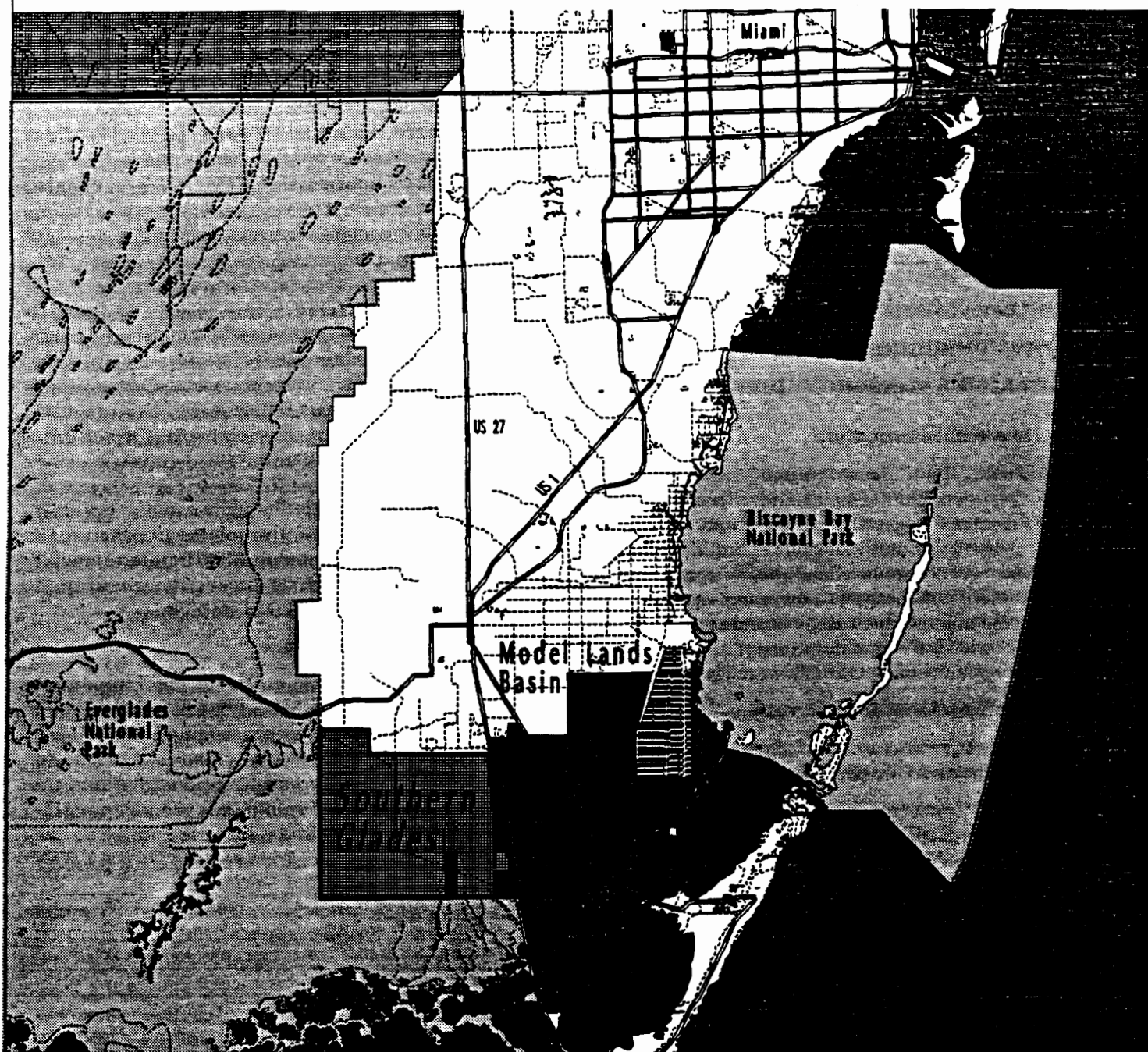
Major problems associated with periodic flood releases to Barnes Sound from Canal-111 and a reduction in sheet flow to Northeast Florida Bay have prompted the District to work with the National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Dade agricultural interests, Florida Bay fishing interests, and a number of other federal, state and local agencies on a plan for structural and operational changes to the existing flood control system. An attempt is being made to restore a more natural distribution of flow to these tidewater zones, while at the same time maintaining an acceptable level of flood protection for the South Dade area. The purchase of private lands adjacent to Canal-111 is necessary for implementation of restoration efforts and to assure that the biota of this portion of Everglades National Park, Florida Bay and Barnes Sound are protected from the harmful effects of urban and agricultural development.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Lands purchased to date are being managed by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) as part of the East Everglades Wildlife and Environmental Area (EEWEA) under an agreement with the District. The District provides supplementary funding for the employment of a full-time biologist by the GFC. A conceptual management plan has been prepared for the EEWEA, and recommendations call for maintaining the Canal-111 portion in as pristine a condition as possible.

#### **C. Public Recreation:**

Hunting and trapping are prohibited in this area. The Canal-111 is open to boats with outboard motors. Fishing, sightseeing, and environmental education are the principal public recreation uses of the Canal-111 area.



- Potential Acquisition Area
- Acquired to Date
- Other Conservation Area



## Southern Glades (C-111 Basin)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 MILES

## Save Our Rivers Project

# WATER CONSERVATION AREAS

Counties: Dade, Broward and Palm Beach  
Total Project Area: 256,000 Acres  
Acres Acquired: 42,124  
Land Cost: \$7,943,552  
Per Acre Cost: \$180  
Acres Remaining: 219,698  
Estimated Assessed Value: \$20,000,000

### 1. General Description

The three Water Conservation Areas (WCA's) are part of the original Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project to provide water supply and flood control to South Florida. The SOR project is designed to complete the public acquisition of outstanding land interests in order to protect this area's role in long-term water resource management. This acquisition was mandated in the original legislation for the Save Our Rivers Program.

### 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

#### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The District and the US Army Corps of Engineers have been regulating water levels in the three Water Conservation Areas, in accordance with criteria initially established in the 1950s and modified at various times over the years to meet changing conditions. The general purpose of the schedules is to provide for the storage of floodwater from developed areas adjacent to the WCAs for later use during the dry season. In establishing the schedules, consideration was given to the needs of wildlife indigenous to the WCAs and the requirements of emergent vegetation. Releases from the WCAs during the dry season and, particularly during drought conditions, are considered vital to the maintenance of adequate water levels in the coastal canals and wellfields and the prevention of saltwater intrusion. Flows from WCA 3 are essential to the well-being of Everglades National Park. The amount and manner of delivery of these flows has and continues to be the subject of intense public

debate. Much work has been done to devise a system of delivery that most closely approximates historical patterns (See Canal-111 SOR Project discussions).

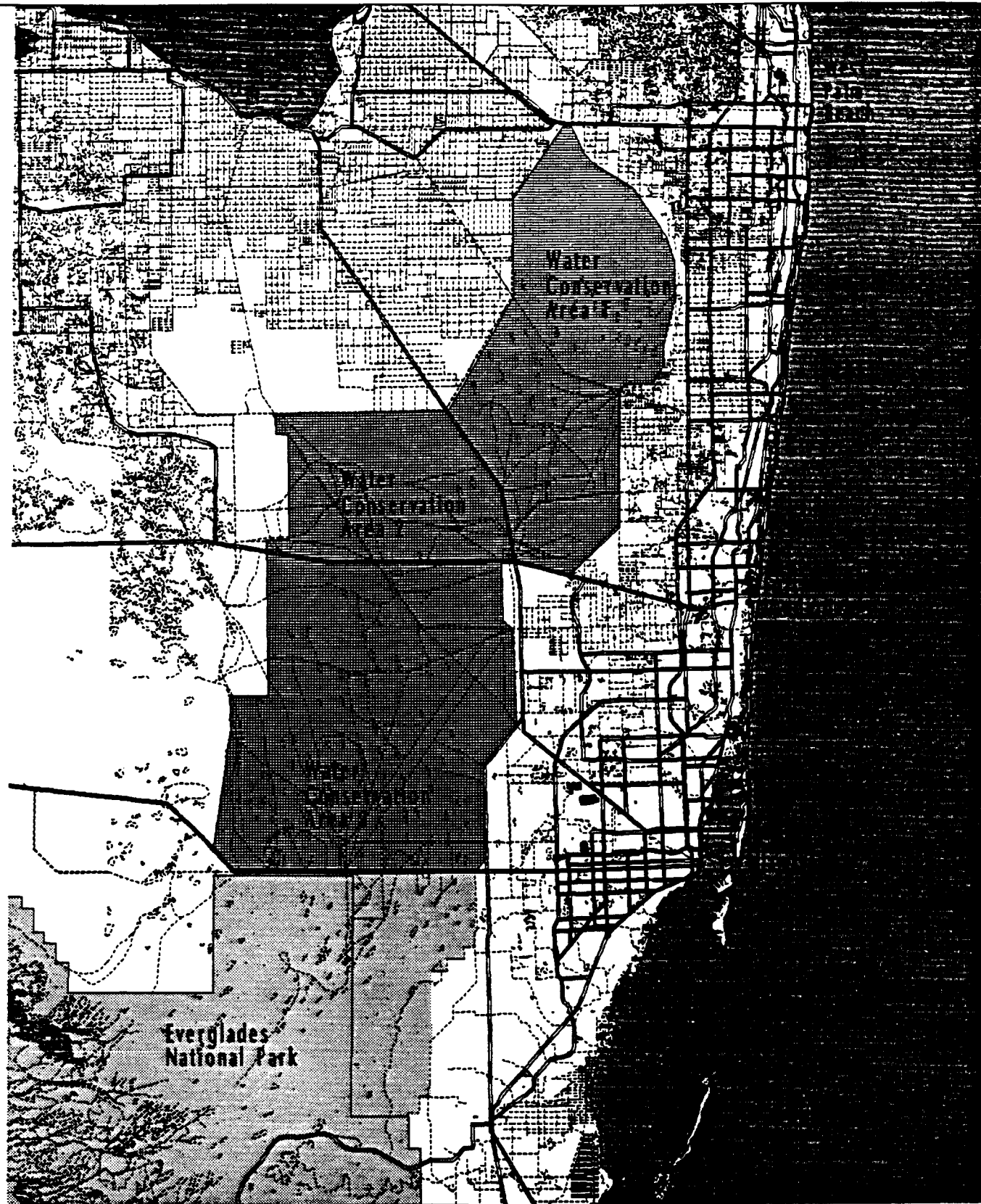
#### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

WCA 1 is managed as the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). WCA's 2 and 3 are managed as the Everglades Wildlife Management Area by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) under separate cooperative and license agreements with the District. Both agencies have developed management plans and actively manage the fish and wildlife resources and public use of the areas under their charge. The District has been engaged in environmental research in the WCA for many years, concentrating on the effects of water quantity and quality on the biota. In recent years, efforts to halt backpumping into Lake Okeechobee have resulted in increased flows from the Everglades Agricultural Area into WCA 3 and this in turn appears to be triggering certain vegetative changes of concern to environmentalists. ENP officials have expressed concern that water quality problems appearing in WCA 3 will be translocated to ENP unless remedial action is taken. All parties are actively working to find acceptable solutions to this problem.

#### C. Public Recreation:

The Water Conservation Areas are important outdoor recreation areas used heavily by the public for fishing, hunting, boating, frogging, and nature appreciation. Over the years, numerous recreation sites and facilities have been provided to facilitate public access. Site development has generally followed the recommendations set forth in two published recreational plans: RECREATION PLAN, THE AREA SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE, prepared in 1960 for the District by the Florida Development Commission and RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVERGLADES WATER CONSERVATION AREAS: FIVE YEAR PLAN 1973-1978, prepared in 1974 by the Everglades Recreational Planning Board. Both the USFWS and the GFC have established rules and regulations governing public use of these areas.





■ SOR Project



Water Conservation Areas

0 10 20 30 MILES



*Loxahatchee*

## **Approved Projects**

Projects included in the FIVE YEAR PLAN will not necessarily be acquired. Acquisition is dependent upon the level of funding and a number of priority factors (see Policies 4.100, 5.001).



## *LAND FOR WATERS' SAKE*

*The goal of the Save Our Rivers Program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources.*

*Projects may be submitted by nearly any interested party. These lands are analyzed to determine the extent that each project meets the program objectives.*

*Projects selected by the Land Selection Committee and the Governing Board are incorporated into the Five-Year Plan, updated annually.*

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **DADE BROWARD LEVEE**

**County:** Dade  
**Total Project Area:** 12,000Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$30,000,000  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

The property is located directly north of the Tamiami Canal (Canal-4), with Levee 30/US 27 forming the western boundary and the Dade Broward Levee the eastern boundary.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

The project provides water supply benefits by maintaining groundwater levels to the east and may help support proposed wellfields. The land lies within the cone of influence of Dade County's Northwest Wellfields. The project is anticipated to have a positive impact upon the area designated as "urban water conservation area." The project also provides recharge to the Snapper Creek wellfield located south of Tamiami Trail and east of Florida's Turnpike.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

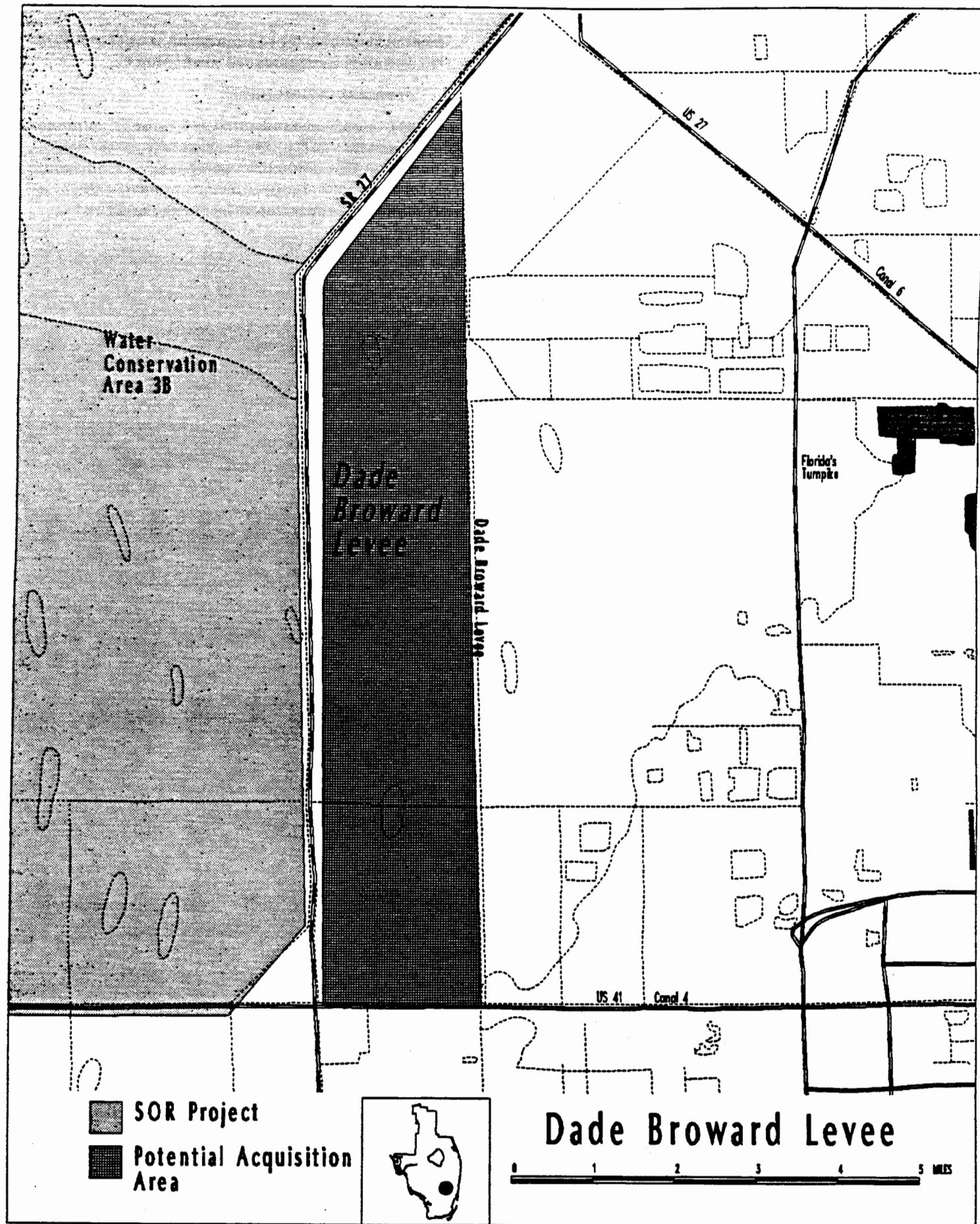
Dade County has shown interest in assisting to restore and maintain the property. They have added the land to the Dade County proposed acquisition list. Exotic invasion has occurred, primarily concentrated in the southern one-half of the property. Overdrainage by the Tamiami Canal has seriously degraded the southern portion. It is unlikely that this area could be restored.

### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Management needs would be basically directed toward control of Melaleuca and coordination with the Dade County Water and Sewer Authority.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Public use of this property is anticipated to be low due to the lack of recreational opportunities.



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **EVERGLADES BUFFER STRIP**

**County:** Broward  
**Total Project Area:** 1,600 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$1,600,000  
**Number of Owners:** Multiple

### **1. General Description**

Everglades Buffer Strip totals approximately 4,000 acres. It exists as a one-half mile wide strip lying between the District's Levee 37 and Levee 33 and U.S. Highway 27 in Broward County. It extends from State Road 84 to the Dade County line.

The project application includes a 1,600 acre portion which extends from SR 84 on the north to Canal 11 on the south.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Conservation Areas 3A and 3B leak large amounts of water through Levee 37 and Levee 33, due to the high head differential that presently exists. District ownership of the Buffer Strip could allow higher control elevations to be maintained, thus reducing leakage from the Conservation Areas.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The project area has been impacted by rock mining and exotic plant invasion, primarily *Melaleuca*. There appears to be a number of constraints to restoration: The existing FP&L service road, the elevation of the sub-grade for U.S. 27, the relative elevation of lands and levees, and the long narrow shape of the project.

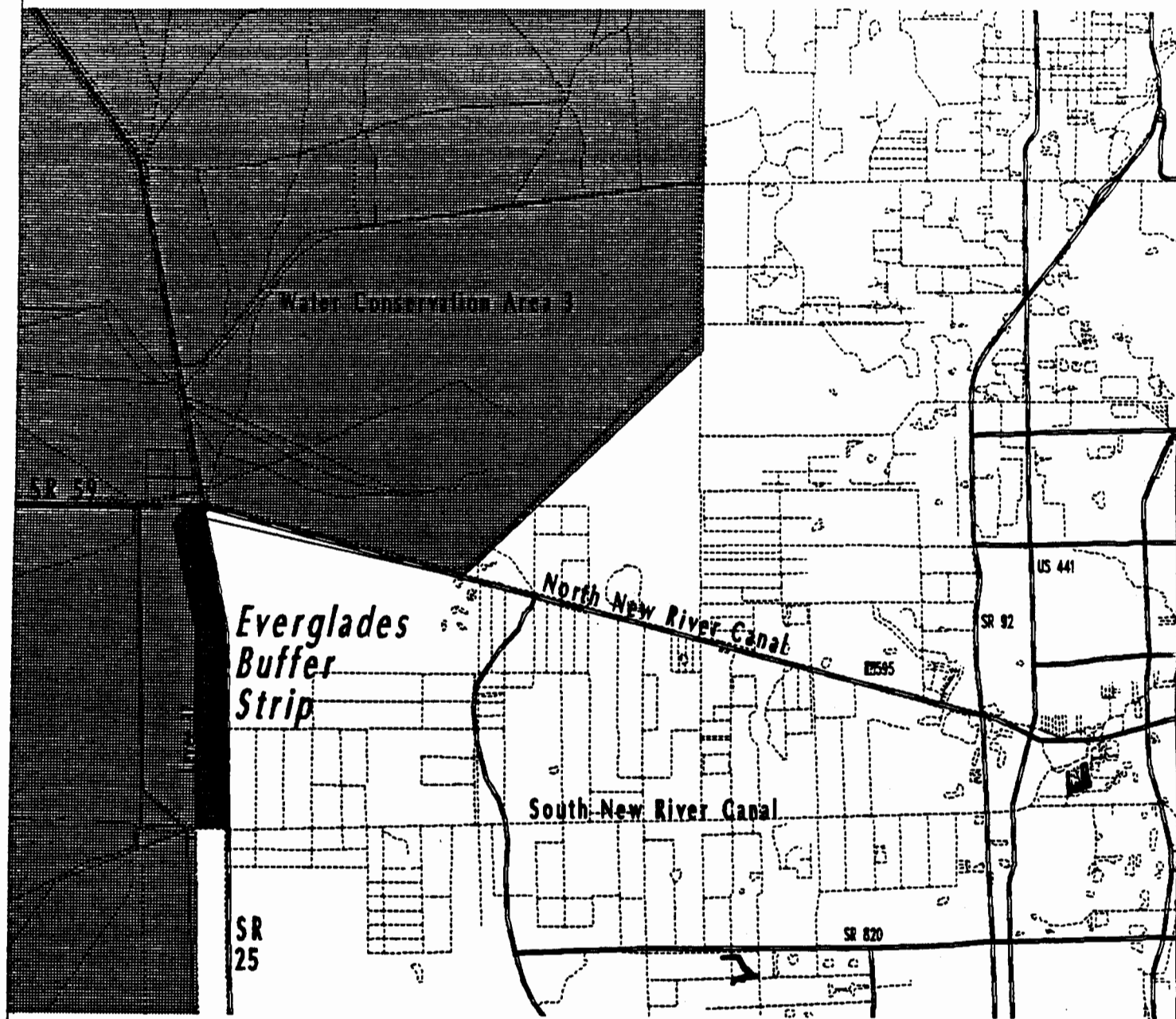
### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**



Broward County has indicated significant interest in the entire 4000 acres of buffer strip, which includes the 1600 acres submitted as a Save Our Rivers project. The County is already participating in research for controls to inhibit the spread of *Melaleuca*. They have indicated an interest in monetary programs to help in acquisition of the land and to assist in *Melaleuca* removal and control. Early management tasks will include a program to

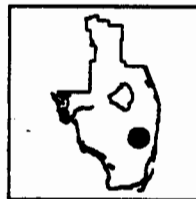
inform the public about the importance of the Buffer Strip and an exotic removal/control effort.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Broward County has indicated the Buffer Strip lands offer potential for public recreation, which take advantage of its abundant open-space. Recreational activities could include fishing, canoe trails, and environmental education/interpretive facilities.



-  Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area



**Everglades  
Buffer Strip**

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **FISHEATING CREEK**

**County:** Glades  
**Total Project Area:** 43,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$13 Million  
**Number of Owners:** One

### **1. General Description**

Fisheating creek is an extensive riverine swamp system flowing through Glades County. The creek and its headwaters form an extensive watershed covering hundreds of square miles.

In 1991, the District Governing Board approved a boundary revision, which added nearly 15,000 acres to the project. The additional area includes a large freshwater marsh and low pine flatwoods, which buffer the riverine swamp corridor.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Fisheating Creek is the only free-flowing tributary to Lake Okeechobee. The meandering runs and associated flood plain attenuate peak discharges during heavy storm events and are important for water quality improvement prior to discharges entering Lake Okeechobee. Groundwater resources have not been quantified for this area; however, the Surficial Aquifer has suitable capacity to supply low-volume users.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

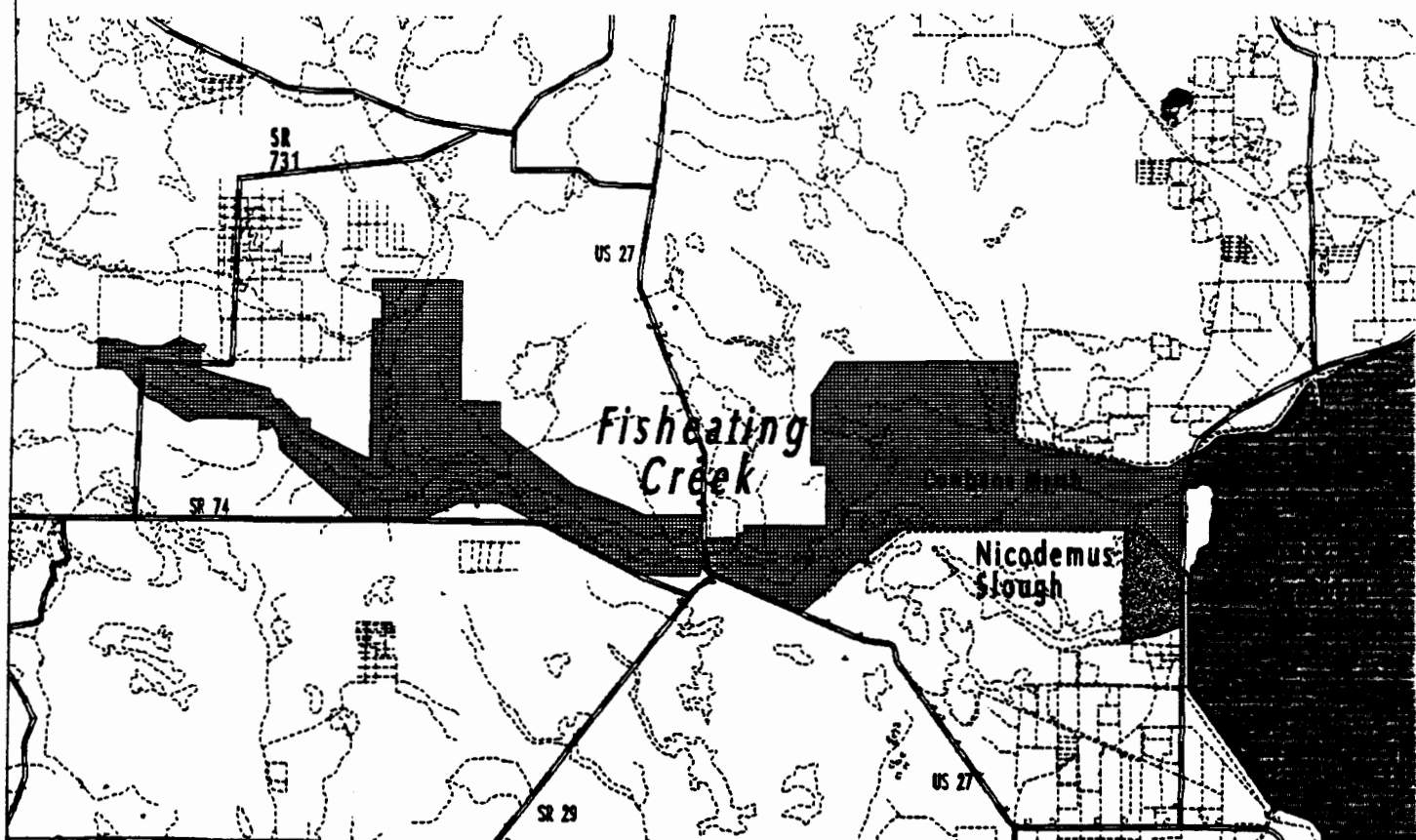
Much of the uplands and wetlands defined by the limits of this project remain in a relatively undisturbed state. Habitat types include cypress sloughs/mixed hardwood swamp forest, emergent marshes, willow thickets and openwater ponds and runs. Land-use in and around the flood plain is mostly native range. Use by wading birds is very heavy, including endangered wood storks, white ibis and great egrets. When stages in Lake Okeechobee are high, Fisheating Creek serves as an important feeding area for birds, which normally use the lake marshes.



### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

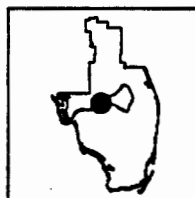
Restoration requirements, if any, would be minimal, as most of the property is in its natural state. A prescribed burning program would be necessary to maintain appropriate species diversity in the plant communities and to reduce the potential for harmful wildfires. Additionally, it would be necessary to target the removal of noxious aquatic weeds from the lakes and creek channel to facilitate canoeing and fishing. Continued livestock grazing would be a likely condition to acquisition of the property and would necessitate the development of an approved program by the USDA Soil Conservation Service in consultation with the District and the livestock operator. Special consideration would be given to maintenance of critical habitat for endangered and/or threatened species, and a trapping program would be required to control the population of feral hogs. Implementation of a comprehensive security program would be needed to prevent unauthorized entry and to discourage poaching and other illegal activities.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Acquisition and protection of Fisheating Creek, its floodplain and suitable upland corridor, could provide the public with opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The reach of the creek upstream of Palmdale has been a popular canoe run for many years and is famous for its scenic attributes. Opportunities to view and photograph the flora and fauna that abound along the creek could be enhanced by the establishment of suitable hiking trails throughout the property and the implementation of guided tours. A connector trail to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail around Lake Okeechobee would be a possibility. Access to the Fort Center archaeological site and the provision of appropriate interpretive facilities could provide visitors an insight to the area's history and early inhabitants. Environmental education programs could also be developed to enhance visitor awareness of the area's ecology. A full service campground is located west of US Highway 27 at Palmdale, and would avoid the necessity of providing these facilities elsewhere on the property.




-  Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area



## Fisheating Creek

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES





## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **LOXAHATCHEE SLOUGH**

**County:** Palm Beach  
**Total Project Area:** 13,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$36 Million  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

The Loxahatchee Slough is located in Palm Beach County, and covers nearly 13,000 acres. It contains a mixture of habitat types, including pine flatwoods, cypress forest, and wet prairie. The present land-use is native range. Some of the current landowners have long-range plans for urban development.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

The lands included in this project are those that border the "Loxahatchee Corridor," which has been pledged for protection by the present landowner. The proposed project would provide additional watershed and upland buffer to the slough corridor. Public water supply potential does not appear to be significant; however, aquifer recharge does occur over the vast expanse of uplands and wetlands. This system is an important watershed for storing surface runoff and providing groundwater baseflow to Canal 18 and the Loxahatchee River.

The site contains a mosaic of habitats and lies in close proximity to several natural areas, including Jonathan Dickinson State Park, the Loxahatchee River SOR corridor, and the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area. The mixture of upland and wetland communities provide needed foraging and nesting sites for wildlife in an area undergoing rapid urban development.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The project area is in relatively good condition. Exotic vegetation is invading the site due to overdrainage on adjacent parcels. The exotics appear to be a controllable amount, but would require regular attention. Drainage swales and

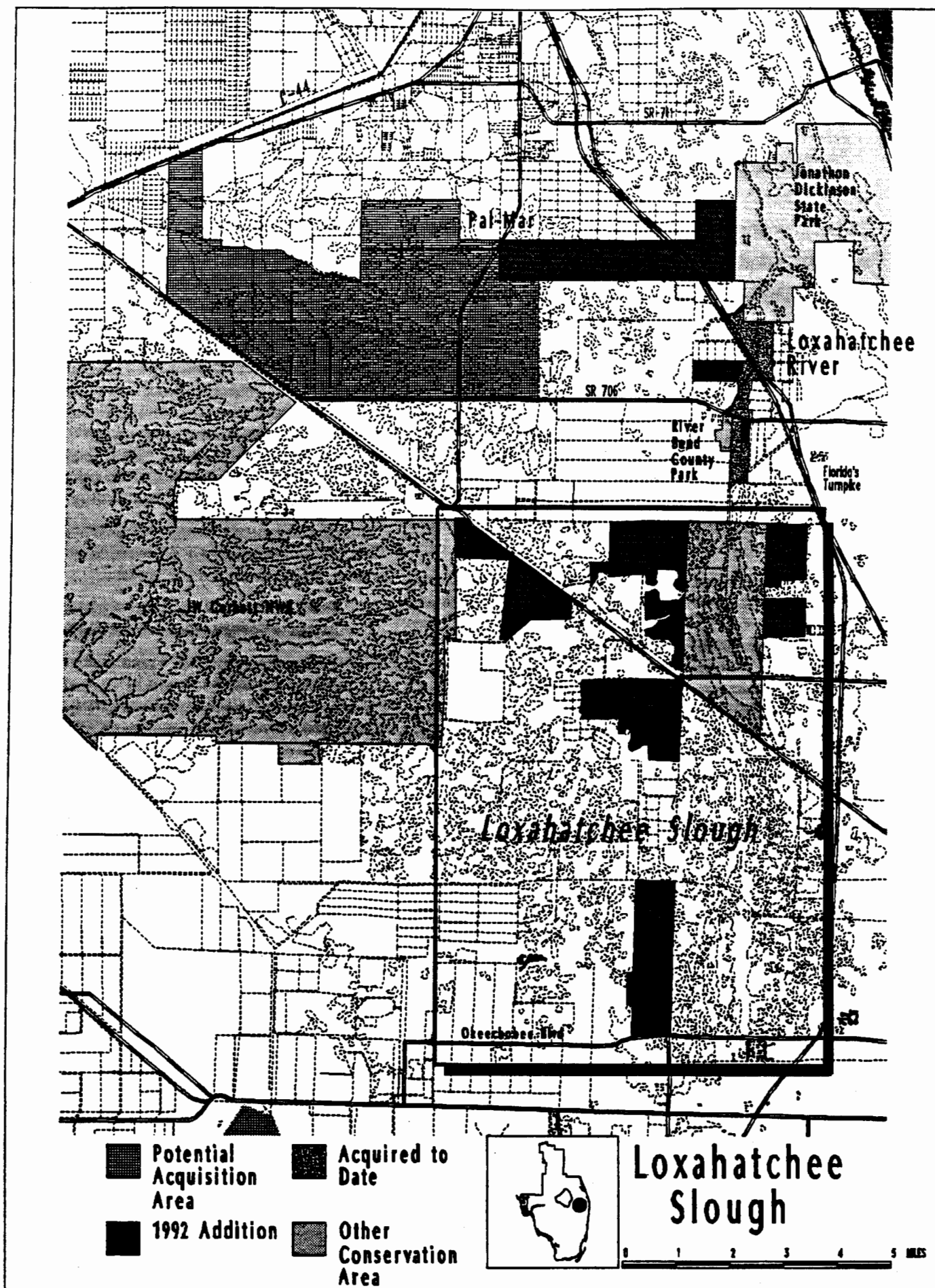
ditches exist, but not to a large degree. Hydrologic restoration could be accomplished by filling or blocking swales and ditches.

### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Palm Beach County has expressed an interest in cooperative management. Hydrologic restoration, exotic control, and prescribed burning all will be required, whoever manages the tract.

### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Its proximity to a large metropolitan area lend this area to heavy public use. Hiking and equestrian trails could be developed in conjunction with local citizen's groups. Environmental education would also be an expected use.



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# MODEL LAND BASINS

**County:** Dade/Monroe  
**Total Project Area:** 31,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$25 Million  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### 1. General Description

The project is located primarily in Dade County with a very small portion on the edge of Monroe County. With the exception of the extreme northwest corner and a one mile wide strip along the northern township line, this area includes all the land east of U.S. 1 and south of the northern boundary of Township 58 South. The FPL cooling ponds at Turkey Point are not included in the project boundary.

The total project area is approximately 31,000 acres and includes a variety of habitats, both freshwater and estuarine. The northwestern corner has been invaded by Australian pine and Brazilian pepper, but the great majority of the site is exotic-free. The majority of the tract is undisturbed fresh and salt water wetlands. The dominant habitat type is wet prairie, interspersed with tree islands. Vegetation in the tree islands includes red bay, dahoon holly, cocoplum and buttonbush in the upland islands, and red, white and black mangroves in the estuarine islands.

This area was historically listed as transverse Everglades by John Henry Davis in his original characterization of the Everglades. These lands form a contiguous habitat corridor with Everglades National Park, the Canal 111 Aeroject purchases, Biscayne National Park, Crocodile Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the north Key Largo CARL purchases, John Pennekamp State Park, and the existing National Marine Sanctuary.

### 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The sheet flow of water across this area provides high quality freshwater to the estuarine areas of Card Sound, Barnes Sound and Manatee Bay. This basin is the primary source of overland freshwater for Biscayne National Park and the southern portions of Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve. Card

Sound is classified as both an Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Water.

This area functions as a recharge area for maintenance of the salt-barrier line thus serving an important function for the prevention of further saltwater intrusion into the region. Holding water on the property will aid this process.

### 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

This area is habitat for many threatened and endangered species including; Florida panthers, American crocodiles, wood storks, the coast leather fern, and the silver palm. This area is federally designated as critical habitat for the American crocodile. Natural communities are still in excellent condition for the most part. In conjunction with the shoreline of Biscayne National Park, this area forms the longest undeveloped strip of red mangroves on the east coast of Florida. The project has received support from the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Dade County.

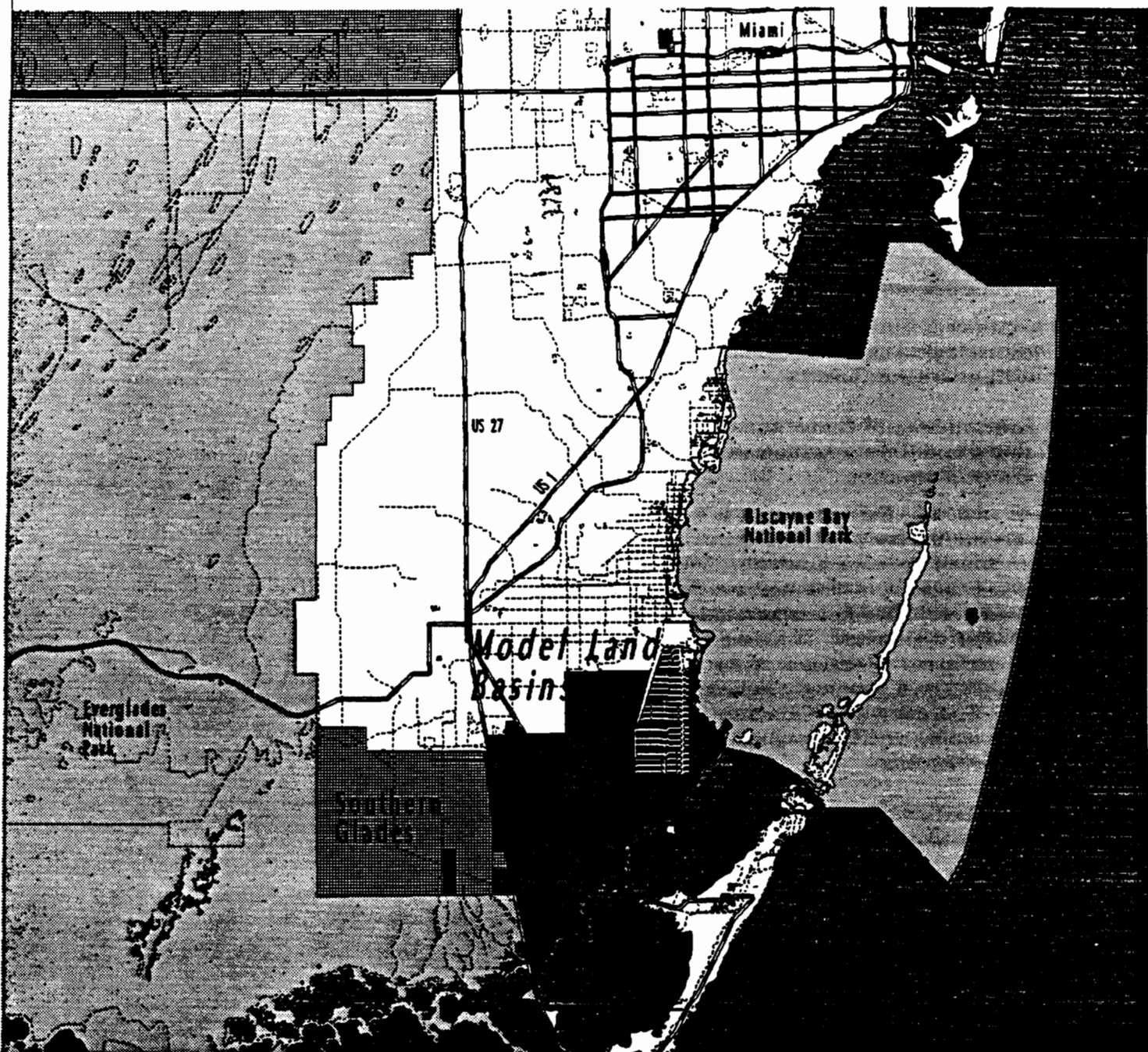
The District is working with DOT in the design of U.S. 1 improvements to increase freshwater flows under the highway from the west.




### 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

With the exception of the exotic invasion in the northwest corner, the tract is in very good condition. Dade County has indicated that this site would be a high priority area for treatment of exotics as part of their off-site mitigation program for development elsewhere in the county. The National Park Service has stated that they would be willing to manage the lands under certain conditions. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through Crocodile Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, has also made a verbal offer to assist in management.

### 5. Recreation Potential:

This tract is surprisingly open and, for the dedicated hiker, would provide the opportunity to explore a rather unique part of Florida. There is excellent opportunity for use of the extensive shoreline, by boaters and fishermen.



-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Acquired to Date
-  Other Conservation Area



## Model Land Basins

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **NORTH FORK ST. LUCIE RIVER**

**County:** St. Lucie  
**Total Project Area:** 2,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$5,600,000  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. General Description**

The stretch of North Fork under consideration is approximately six miles long, and extends from the White City bridge to Canal 24.

### **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

"More than 80% of the project area is comprised of wetlands within the river flood plain. The wetland types include hardwood swamp, low hammock, sawgrass marsh and mangrove forest. The mangroves are limited to approximately the lower one-third of the project. The flood plain wetlands help lower current velocities in the river, thereby attenuating and gradually releasing the flood waters. This action also facilitates recharge of the surficial aquifer, and filters out nutrients, pollutants and suspended solids.

### **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

This stretch is included within the North Fork St. Lucie River Aquatic Preserve and is classified as Outstanding Florida Water. In addition to the river flood plain, the project includes approximately 175 acres of high quality uplands, such as high hammock, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub.

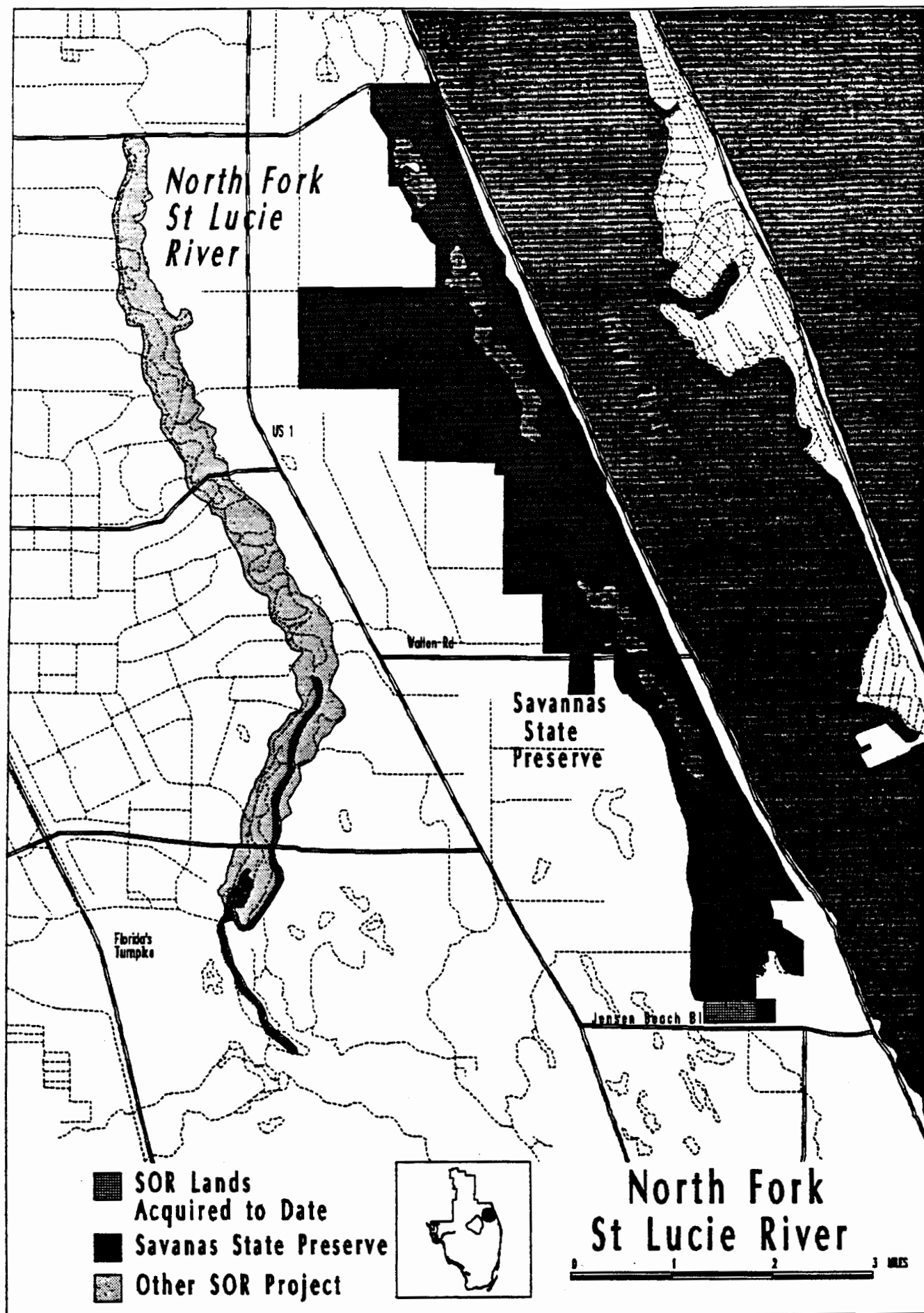
### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Encroaching urban development proves the greatest threat. No flood plain restoration or structure replacement appears necessary. Some exotic vegetation is present, but in controllable amounts. Both St. Lucie County and the City of Port St. Lucie have agreed to manage the property and commit funds for management should it be acquired.

### **5. Public Recreation:**

Due to its proximity to the rapidly expanding areas of St. Lucie County, the property is readily accessible to potential users. Boating, fishing and canoeing are actively pursued on this part of the river at this time. The willingness of local government to participate in management increases the likelihood of riverfront parks and other passive recreational facilities.





## Save Our Rivers Project

# SAVANNAS

County: St. Lucie and Martin  
Acres Acquired: 77.13  
Land Cost: \$3,100,000<sup>2</sup>  
Total Project Area: 5,100 Acres<sup>1</sup>  
Estimated Assessed Value: \$10,000,000  
Number of Owners: Numerous

### 1. General Description

The Savannas is located between the coastal dune, west of the Indian River, and the pine flatwoods of southeastern St. Lucie County. The Savannas extend into Northern Martin County. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has acquired approximately 4,100 acres under the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program. This area is managed by DNR as the Savannas State Preserve. The 1,000 acres is the remainder of the project to be acquired. The District and DNR would cooperate in acquisition.

### 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The freshwater aquifer which underlies the Savannas is not productive enough for municipal uses, but the recharge that occurs along the coastal ridge serves to hold back the saltwater wedge, thereby reducing the danger of saltwater intrusion. Habitat types are diverse and include sand pine scrub, openwater sloughs, emergent marshes and low pine flatwoods. The wetlands are important feeding and nesting sites for wading birds in St. Lucie and Martin Counties whose habitat has been lost to urban development. The Savannas is under heavy development pressure on both the east and west sides.

### 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The Savannas is one of the most unique and endangered natural systems in the District. It is a remnant coastal wetland system, which historically extended along most of the Southeast Florida coast. Most of the area is in its natural state, thus

eliminating the need for restoration. The wetlands are highly susceptible to degradation by stormwater inputs from urban development.

### 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

Exotic plant growth is minimal. Wetland communities are still in good condition. Extensive hydrologic restoration does not appear necessary. Management of the additional lands would be undertaken by DNR as part of the Savannas State Preserve.

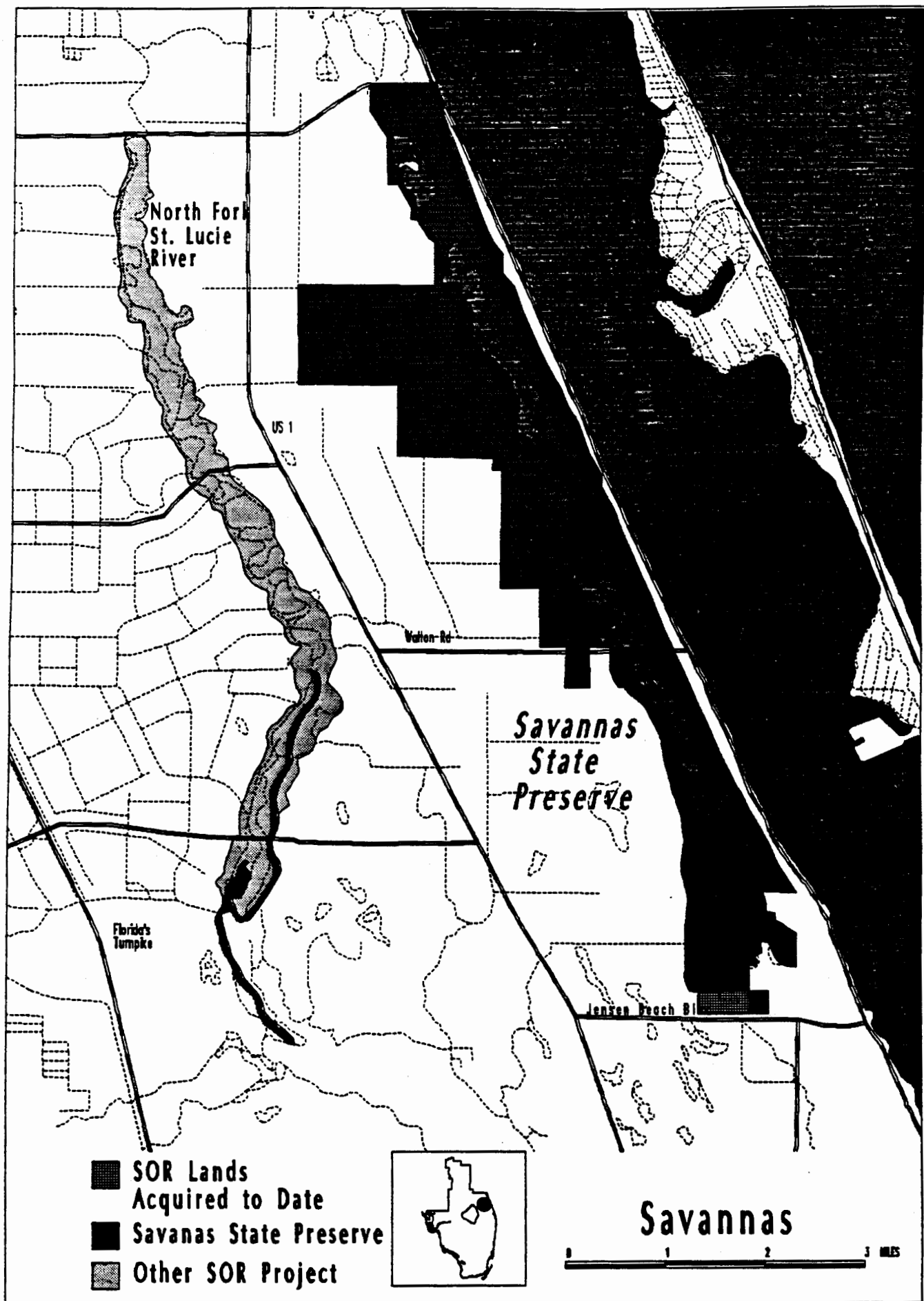
### 5. Public Recreation:

Public use of the Savannas is very high. It is used extensively by fishermen, canoeists and photographers. Its close proximity to urban population centers will increase the use by the public and school groups.

<sup>1</sup>4,100 Acres acquired under Conservation and Recreation Lands Program (CARL)

<sup>2</sup>\$1,000,000 provided by Martin County





## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **SOUTH FORK ST. LUCIE RIVER**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Martin</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>184 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

### **1. General Description**

This project includes a portion of the upper reach of the South Fork St. Lucie River, commencing approximately three-fourth of one mile south of State Road 76 and extending approximately one and one-fourth miles southward. The project was proposed by the citizens of Martin County to preserve and protect this relatively undisturbed portion of the river for the use and enjoyment of existing and future generations.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The productivity of the St. Lucie Estuary is dependent upon both the quantity and quality of water entering the river. There is evidence that adjacent land-use activities have altered the natural hydrologic regime, resulting in changes in the density and species composition of the hydric-hammock along this reach of the river.

A conceptual management plan covering the river corridor has been prepared by Martin County, in consultation with the District. The purpose of the plan is to preserve and enhance the condition of this reach through a combination of land acquisition, land-use regulation, and public-use management. The effective implementation of development guidelines and regulations for private properties within, and immediately adjoining, the corridor will be critical to the success of this effort.

Regular inspections will be made by Martin County Code Enforcement Officers to ensure that no activities are taking place within the corridor that

are inconsistent with the goal of protecting and enhancing this reach of the river. A boundary fence along the west side of the District's property will be installed and posted to prevent unauthorized access from areas to the west. The Martin County Sheriff's office will provide regular patrols to those areas accessible by vehicle. The District will continue to monitor appropriate properties for surface water management permit compliance.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Martin County has agreed to manage the portion of the corridor purchased by the District and to develop and implement the necessary land-use regulations. An agreement setting forth the general terms and conditions governing management of the tract will be executed between the parties.

The need for exotic species control, prescribed burning, and other management measures will be determined by the county in consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies. Where appropriate, specific programs will be implemented.

#### **C. Public Recreation:**

This reach of the river is quite scenic and has been used rather infrequently in the past by canoeists and fishermen. Martin County maintains a small boat access site near State Road 76. Additionally, an upland site on the west side of the river has been used in the past by the Boy Scouts.

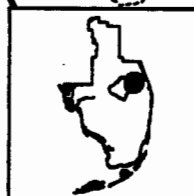
Future uses of the river corridor will be restricted to passive uses, such as canoeing, hiking, fishing, picnicking and nature appreciation. Hunting will be prohibited, and vehicular access will be restricted to established access sites. Consideration will be given to the establishment of additional sites to facilitate public-use; however, new river access sites will be restricted to the use of non-motorized craft. Site maintenance will be undertaken by Martin County.

SR  
76

*South Fork  
St Lucie  
River*

Florida's  
Turnpike

- Potential Acquisition Area
- Acquired to Date



**South Fork St Lucie River**



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **STRAZZULLA**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Palm Beach</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>1,865 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>1,225 Acres</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$2,449</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>640</b>

### **1. General Description**

The Strazzulla tract is located east of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent to Levee 40. The western half of the property is sawgrass marsh. Cypress Sloughs, mixed with low pine flatwoods and wet prairies, dominate the eastern half.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition**

Much of the eastern one-third of the project is being invaded by Melaleuca. The reason for this appears to be due to the lowering of the water table on the residential property to the east. If efforts to halt the invasion of exotic plants are expected to be successful, hydrologic restoration is essential.

An investigation was made to determine the feasibility of diverting pumped stormwater away from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and onto the exotic-infested portion of the SOR tract. It was hoped that the plan would provide the SOR property with needed water, while providing an acceptable level of treatment for the stormwater. Unfortunately, a large enough area could not be provided to accept the volume of water necessary to make the project work.

A proposal has been made to install another communications tower on the property. Proposed mitigation, if approved, as well as funds generated from the lease, would be directed at exotic control and removal. An illegal hunting camp was located and removed from the site.

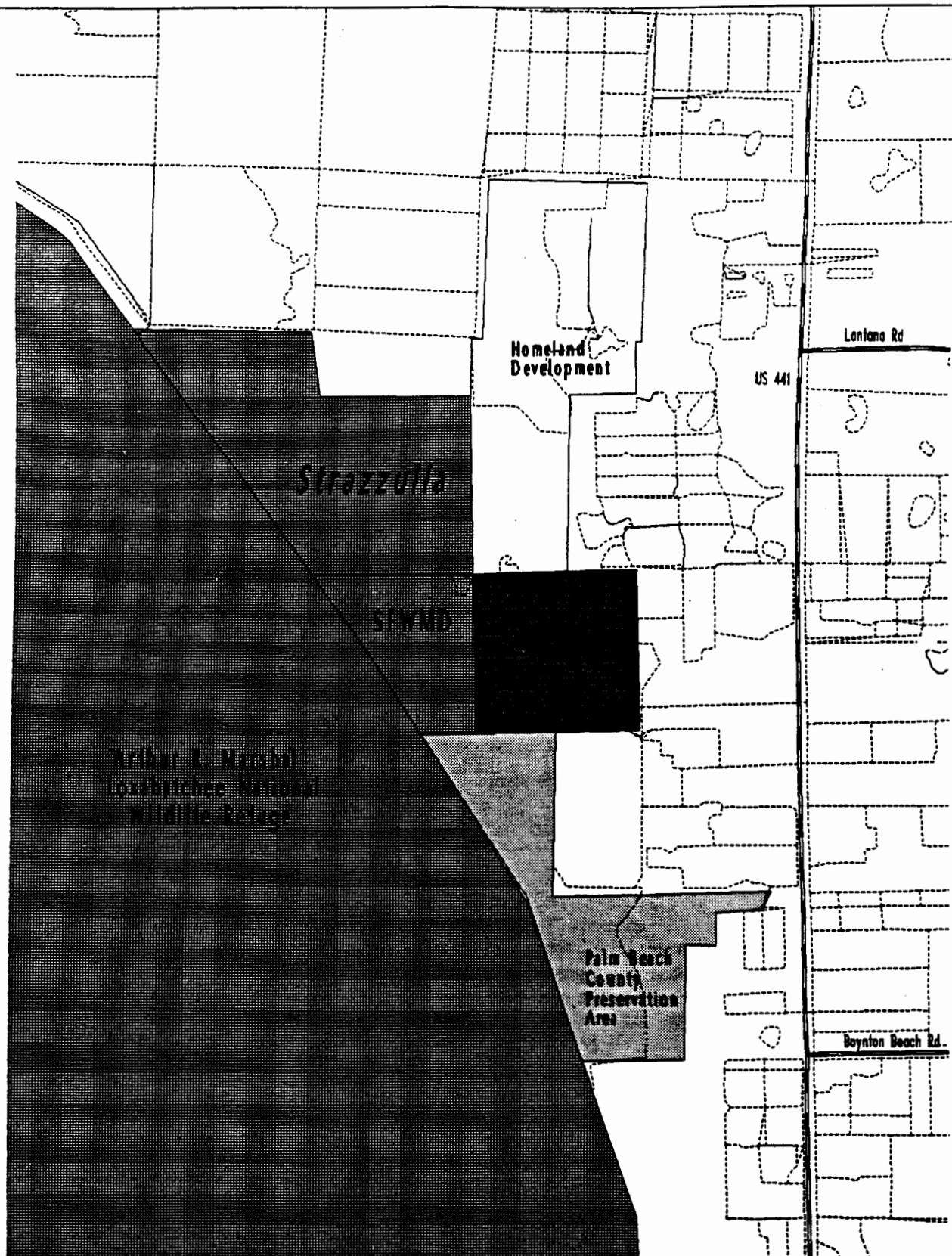
#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner**

Illegal hunting and trespassing by individuals on off-road vehicles continues to be a problem. The District has contracted with a private security firm with certified law enforcement personnel to provide regularly scheduled road patrols.

In FY 92, the District intends to solicit proposals from private contractors for the control of exotics, limited hydrologic restoration, and a public use and recreation plan.

#### **C. Public Recreation**

Recreational possibilities would be mostly passive, in nature, and probably limited to hiking and wildlife observation.



- Acquired to Date
- 1992 Addition
- Other Conservation Area



Strazzulla

0 1 2 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **STORMWATER TREATMENT AREA 3**

**County:** Palm Beach  
**Total Project Area:** 14,000 Acres  
**Estimated Assessed Value:** \$46 million  
**Number of Owners:** Numerous

### **1. Purpose & Function:**

To reduce phosphorus concentrations entering WCA-3A from the Structure 7 drainage basin.

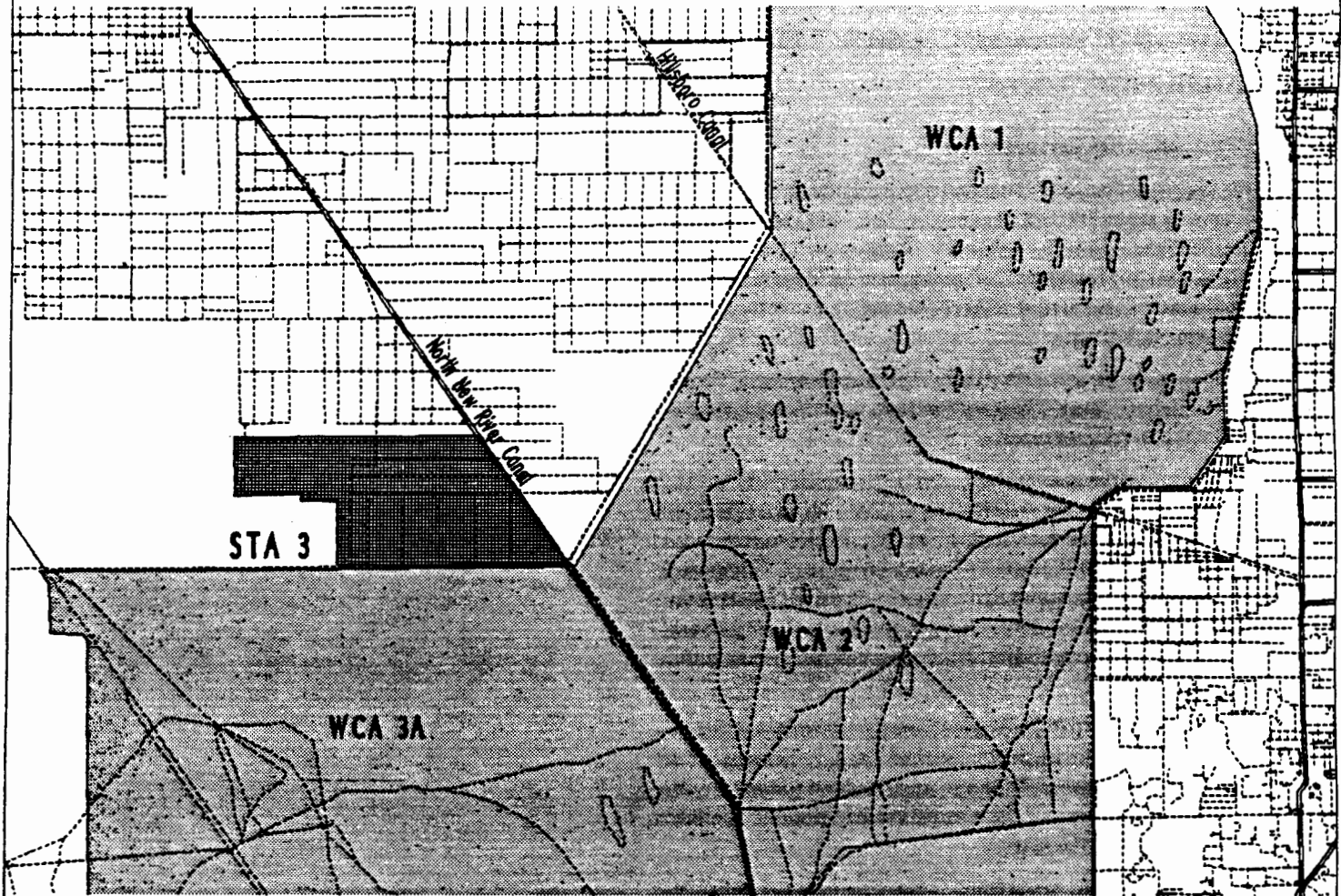
### **2. Location & Land Use:**

- 14,000 acres located between Station Structure 7 and Holey Land.
- Mixed acreages of primarily sod with some other agricultural uses.

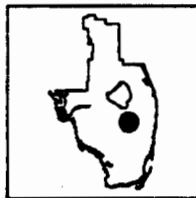
### **3. Benefits:**

- Removal of the approximately 57 tons of phosphorus per year from the Structure 7 and Structure 8 drainage basin prior to discharging into WCA-3A.
- Phosphorus reduction will directly benefit WCA-3A.
- WMA-3 will reduce the S-7 and S-8 basin phosphorus problems, will redistribute sheet flow along most the northern section of WCA-3A and may also be used to reduce loadings to the Holey Land.





-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  SOR Project



## Stormwater Treatment Areas

0 2 4 6 8 10 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# TELEGRAPH SWAMP

County: Charlotte  
Total Project Area: 10,000 Acres  
Estimated Assessed Value: \$5,000,000  
Number of Owners: One

### 1. General Description

Telegraph Swamp is located in Charlotte County and covers nearly 10,000 acres. It is a mixture of low pine flatwoods, cypress heads and emergent freshwater wetlands. The surrounding land-uses are improved pasture and native range, as well as some row-crop farming.

### 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

This is a diverse system with a number of habitat types. It connects with the C.M. Webb Wildlife Management Area to the north, which covers an additional 65,000 acres of similar habitat. Telegraph Swamp has important water supply features. Although little hydrogeologic investigation has been done for this area, the following assumptions can be made:

- a. This part of Charlotte County is underlain by a water table aquifer, which has a potential for development of large quantities of water for public supply. The aquifer is thickest beneath Telegraph Swamp.
- b. A situation in which a swamp occurs over the thickest part of an aquifer is ideal for aquifer recharge during the transition from dry to wet season.
- c. Telegraph Swamp appears to be an important resource with good aquifer recharge capability and potential for wellfield development. However, excessive withdrawals from the aquifer, particularly from poorly placed wells, will alter the hydroperiod of the wetland and adverse environmental impacts will result.

### 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Telegraph Swamp is in excellent condition. No exotic vegetation has been observed. Hydrologic

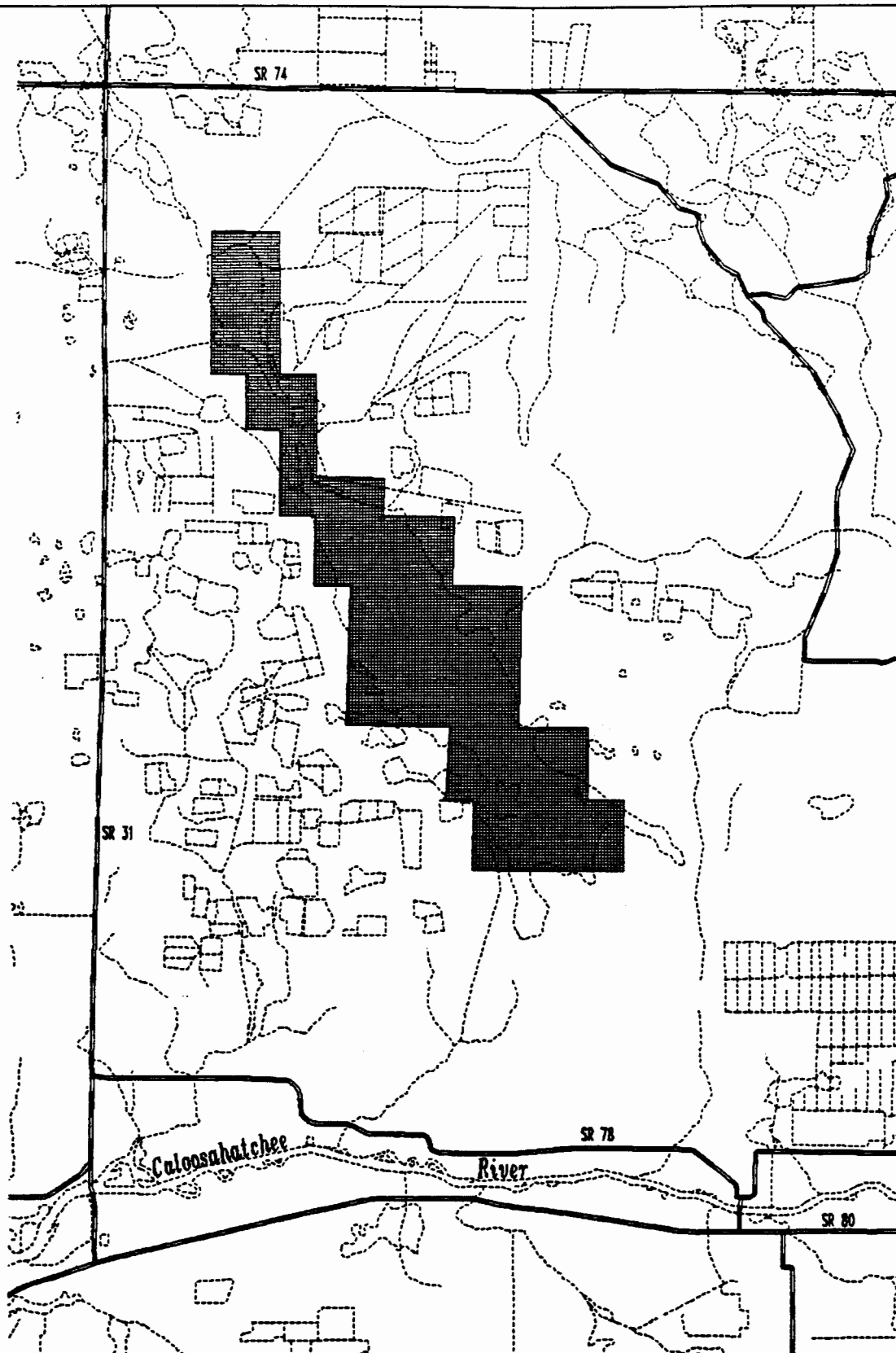
restoration would not be necessary. The size of the swamp and the single ownership of land around it provide it the highest degree of protection.

### 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

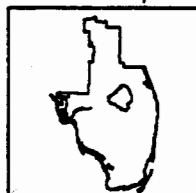
Due to the size and healthy condition of the system, management requirements are minimal.

### 5. Public Recreation:

The potential for public use is uncertain. It provides excellent opportunities for hunting, but the fact that it is totally surrounded by private land and has minimal access probably limits its public-use potential.



■ SOR Project



Telegraph Swamp

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES



*Corkscrew*

**Completed Projects**

## *LAND FOR WATERS' SAKE*

*The goal of the Save Our Rivers Program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources.*

*Projects may be submitted by nearly any interested party. These lands are analyzed to determine the extent that each project meets the program objectives.*

*Projects selected by the Land Selection Committee and the Governing Board are incorporated into the Five-Year Plan, updated annually.*

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **BIG PINE KEY**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Monroe</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,999,900</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$10,581</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>0</b>

### **1. General Description:**

The Big Pine Key project is designed to compliment the existing Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquisitions were initiated by The Nature Conservancy, and by Governing Board action. The District's contribution was limited to \$2,000,000. In 1990, the District completed its land acquisition commitment to the project. The District supports the ongoing land acquisition efforts by the Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy to protect the remaining undeveloped parcels within the project boundaries.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The project has been cut up by the numerous roads, which were used to subdivide the property. If enough lots can be acquired in the future, it may be possible to degrade some of the roads and revegetate with native species. The pine rockland plant community that historically dominated the island is gradually being overtaken by tropical hammock species, due to the suppression of natural fire. The pine rockland community is considered globally threatened. One of the major thrusts of the management program will be to reintroduce prescribed fire to reverse the hammock invasion. Numerous ditches were excavated through the limestone bedrock and connected to adjacent coastal waters to allow tidal fluctuations to control the mosquito populations in the freshwater sloughs. Plans will be developed to fill mosquito ditches where they will not affect existing property owners. Exotic vegetation has invaded many of the disturbed sites and a concentrated efforts will be made to control them.

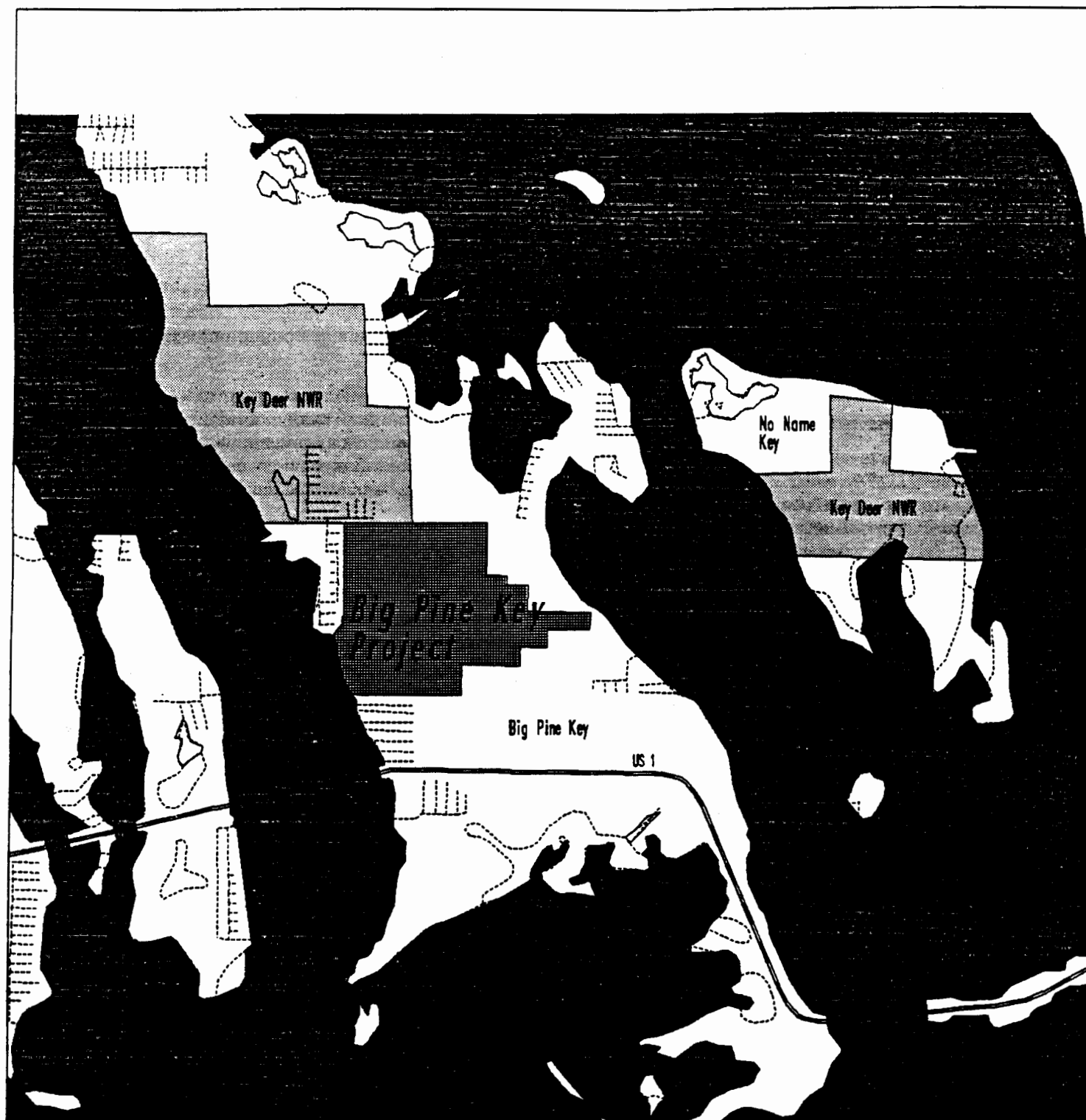
#### **B. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**



With the exception of a single 78 acre tract, the District's ownership pattern within the project is scattered and made up of mostly one acre parcels. Due to the scattered ownership and the long travel distance for Save Our Rivers field personnel, the District is trying to enter into a contractual management agreement with a qualified agency or firm. In preparation for this, the District has contracted with The Nature Conservancy to develop an operational management plan, with particular emphasis on prescribed fire, exotic plant control, habitat improvement, and mosquito ditch restoration.

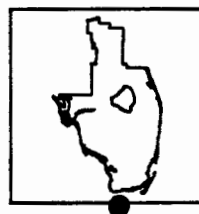
#### **C. Public Recreation:**

It is anticipated that hiking trails and a public information/interpretive program be established in conjunction with volunteer groups, such as the Florida Trail Association, the District, and the managing organization.





- 
**Acquired to Date**  
 190 acres within area shown
- 
**Other Conservation Area**



**Big Pine Key**

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# DUPUIS RESERVE

<b>Counties:</b>	<b>Martin and Palm Beach</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>21,875 Acres</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$23,000,000</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>21,875</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,051</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>0</b>

### **1. General Description**

The DuPuis Reserve (formerly Whitebelt Ranch) encompasses 21,875 acres of improved and semi-improved pasture, pine flatwoods, and cypress forest in northwestern Palm Beach and Southwestern Martin Counties. It is bordered on the north by State Road 76 and the St. Lucie Canal, on the east by Caulkins Groves and the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area, and on the south and west by the Levee 8 Canal and Tieback Levee. A Florida Power and Light Company transmission lines traverses the east side of the tract. The property is interspersed with numerous ponds, wet prairies, cypress domes and a remnant of Everglades marsh.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

An environmental assessment of the tract has been completed, and efforts are underway to restore a more natural hydroperiod to that portion of the property impacted by the existing drainage system. By retaining water on the property and reducing the rate of runoff, the District plans to revitalize the marshes, ponds and wet prairies, and benefit those species of wildlife that depend on these habitats.

The District has implemented a prescribed burning program in consultation with the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF). Objectives of the burning program include the reduction of hazardous fuel loads, the maintenance of healthy and vigorous native plant communities, and the improvement of wildlife habitat and forage. Care is being taken during burning operations to protect sensitive plant communities and endangered species habitat.

Posting of the reserve has been completed by District personnel, and routine patrols are being made by both trained law enforcement personnel, under a security contract, and the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

The District has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the Department of Natural Resources for management of the property.

Wetland Restoration began in 1989, with an extensive project for reflooding the Levee 8 Marsh proposed for 1991-1992.

A program has been implemented to combat the spread of exotics on the property. Both chemical and mechanical means are being employed to bring them under control.

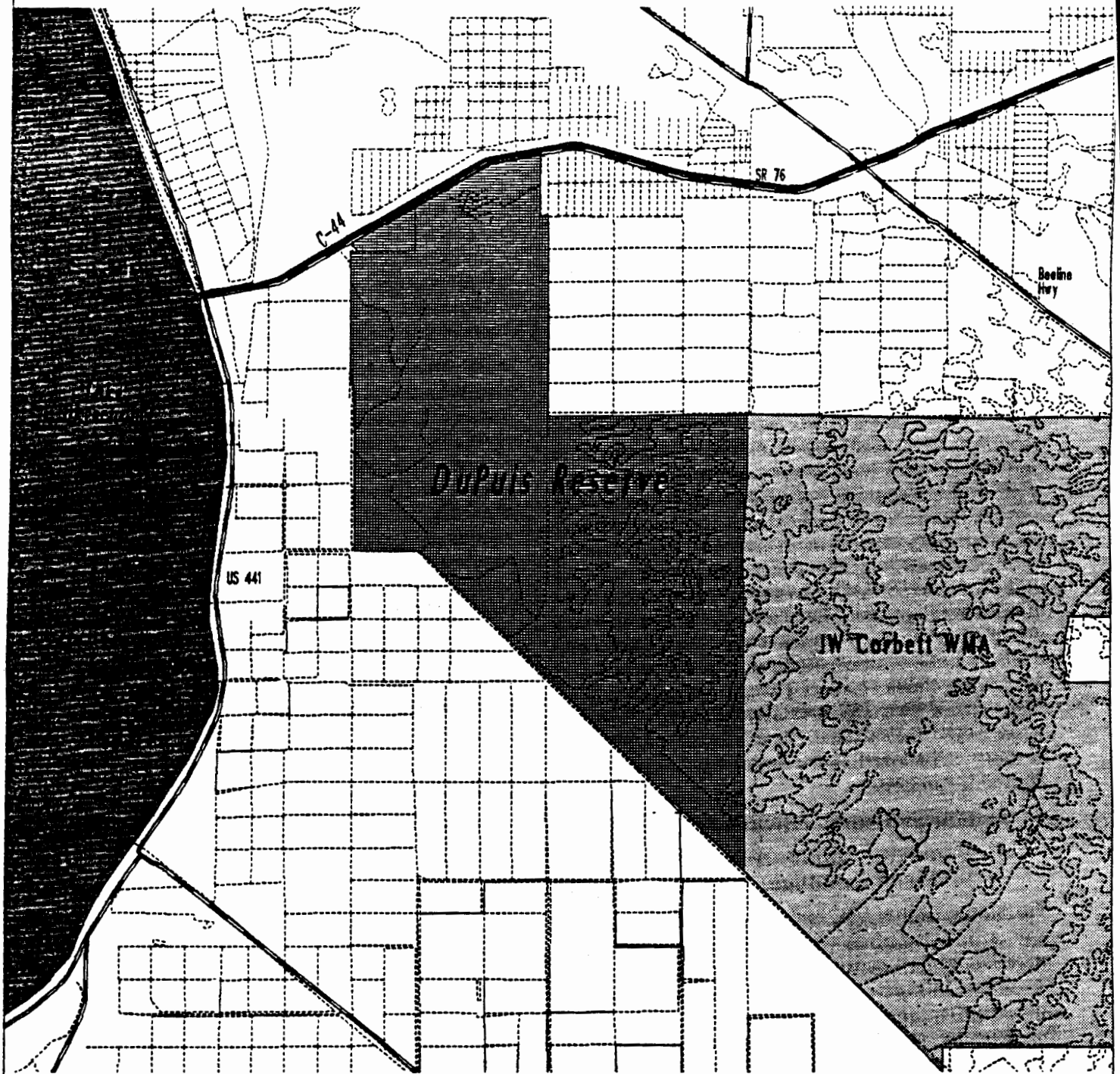
Considerable effort has gone into the removal of underground fuel tanks, mobile homes, discarded equipment and trash associated with the former ranch operation. Buildings have been evaluated for both their soundness and possible use in the operation of the reserve.



Limited repairs have been made to several of the interior roadways. The need for replacement of the major culvert crossings along the main reserve road has been documented and studies are underway to determine the extent of repairs that will be necessary to bring the entire roadway up to a condition suitable for future public use.

#### **C. Public Recreation:**

Hiking and equestrian trail systems have been developed through separate memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the Florida Trail Association (FTA) and the Dupuis Horsemen's Association (DHA). The hiking trails consist of four (4) loops, affording hikers the opportunity of progressively longer hikes ranging from 4.3 to 16.3 miles. A primitive campsite is available for backpackers. Horseback riders have their choice of three trail loops ranging from 7.2 to 16.5 miles. An equestrian center features a restroom with showers, covered picnic area, water and tethering facilities, a corral, stables and areas for parking and overnight camping (tents and self-contained RVs).

Public recreational activities on the reserve are regulated by the DOF and the Commission, and the DOF is implementing a user fee system. A series of limited quota hunts for deer, turkey and feral hogs is held each year under the supervision of the Commission. The program has been designed to provide a high quality hunting experience. No more than 50 hunters are permitted on the reserve each day, and the use of dogs and off road vehicles is prohibited. The Reserve is closed to general recreation activities on hunt days, and hunting schedules are set to minimize closures during the prime hiking and horseback riding periods.



-  Acquired to Date
-  Other Conservation Area



## DuPuis Reserve State Forest

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **LAKE FOREST PRESERVE**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Orange</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>439 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>439</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$3,700,000</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$8,428</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>0</b>

### **1. General Description**

The Preserve covers 439 acres along the southwest shore of Lake Tibet-Butler in Orange County. The land is planned to be used as a nature preserve with limited development to facilitate passive recreation and environmental education. The vegetative communities include major areas of Bay Swamp, Pine Flatwoods, Wetland Forested mixed, smaller areas of Xeric Oak, burned trees, Coniferous Plantation, Cypress, Pond Pine, freshwater marsh and emergent aquatic vegetation. The Lake Forest Nature Preserve site includes approximately 4,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Tibet. The majority of the site is within the 100 year flood plain and is subject to seasonal inundation. State Road 535 (Winter Garden - Vineland Road) traverses the southwest edge of the property.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The stated county goals of the preserve are wetland and wildlife habitat preservation, as well as educational and passive recreation development, in the public interest. A program of prescribed burning and wildfire suppression is planned for the site. Vegetative management is planned to include wetland preservation, exotic control, selective cutting of trees to improve habitat, and reforestation in some areas.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

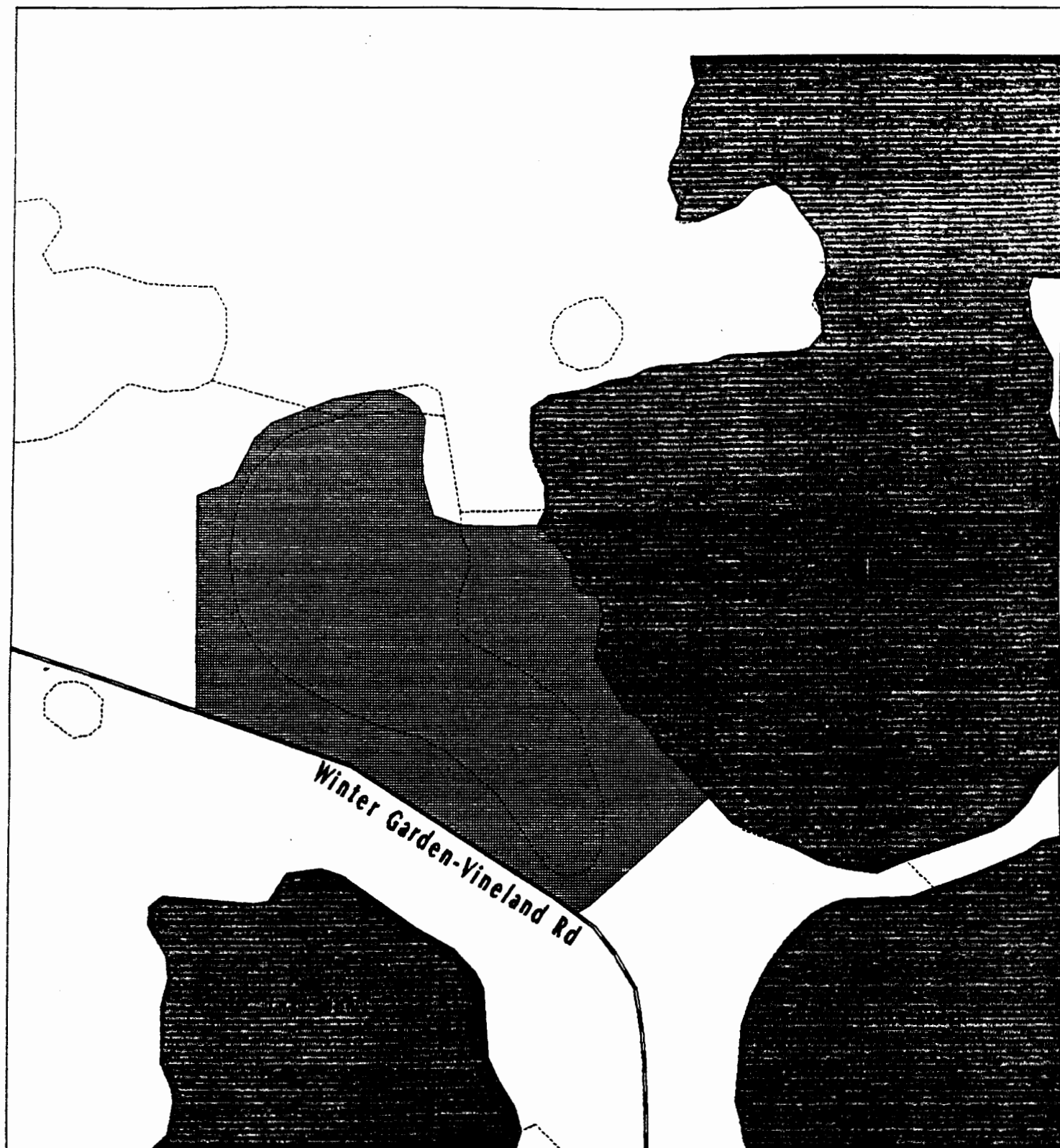
Orange County has agreed to operate and maintain the property as a nature preserve under an agreement with the District. Management goals will include wetland and wildlife preservation,

public education, and passive nature oriented recreation. Management activities will include prescribed burning (to reduce hazardous fuel loads and maintain the structure of vegetative communities), selective clearing to stimulate tree growth, reforestation of damaged sites, exotic species control, and habitat improvement and protection.

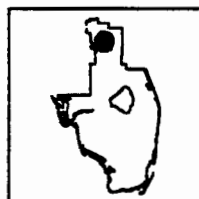
### **C. Public Recreation:**

The diverse nature features of the Preserve make it attractive for hiking, wildlife observation, environmental education and an overall experience indicating the variety of the Central Florida environment. Careful planning, siting and control of access is a portion of the management program.

The Master Plan concentrates the nature center and related uses within the pine flatwood community adjacent to State Road 535, in the southwest portion of the site. The plan locates the facilities and access to minimize disturbance to wetland wildlife habitat. From the nature center, trail systems extend outward reaching into wetland and bog communities, xeric communities and marsh and lake communities. In some areas, boardwalks are planned to extend out in short runs from the main trail loops to observation blinds. An observation tower is located at the southern perimeter of the pine flatwoods community. Other facilities include controlled primitive group camping areas, as well as group and individual picnic areas.




 Acquired to Date



Lake Forest Preserve


 1 MILE



## *Save Our Rivers Project*

# **NICODEMUS SLOUGH**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Glades</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>2,219 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>2,219</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$811</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>0</b>

### **1. General Description**

Nicodemus Slough encompasses approximately 2200 acres of wet prairie, broadleaf marsh and transitional wetland (cordgrass) south of the Herbert Hoover Dike (LD-3) and west of State Road 78. Scattered tree growth occurs along the western edge of the tract. It was targeted for purchase in the original SOR legislation because the land floods periodically under the higher regulation stages, of Lake Okeechobee. The property was used for cattle grazing.

### **2. Land Stewardship Activities:**

#### **A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Until recently, the construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike, coupled with the maintenance of lower stages in Lake Okeechobee, resulted in a shortened hydroperiod and general lowering of water levels in Nicodemus Slough. This in turn altered vegetative patterns on the property and permitted the spread of transitional and upland species. The installation of new water control structures and associated improvements to the Canal 19/Levee-41/42 system will enable the retention and manipulation of flood waters on the property that result from runoff and higher lake stages. A marsh revitalization program has been proposed by District staff for implementation in the future, following the completion of the new water control facilities.

#### **B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

The District is preparing a conceptual management plan for the property, and discussions are being held with Glades County regarding the establishment of a

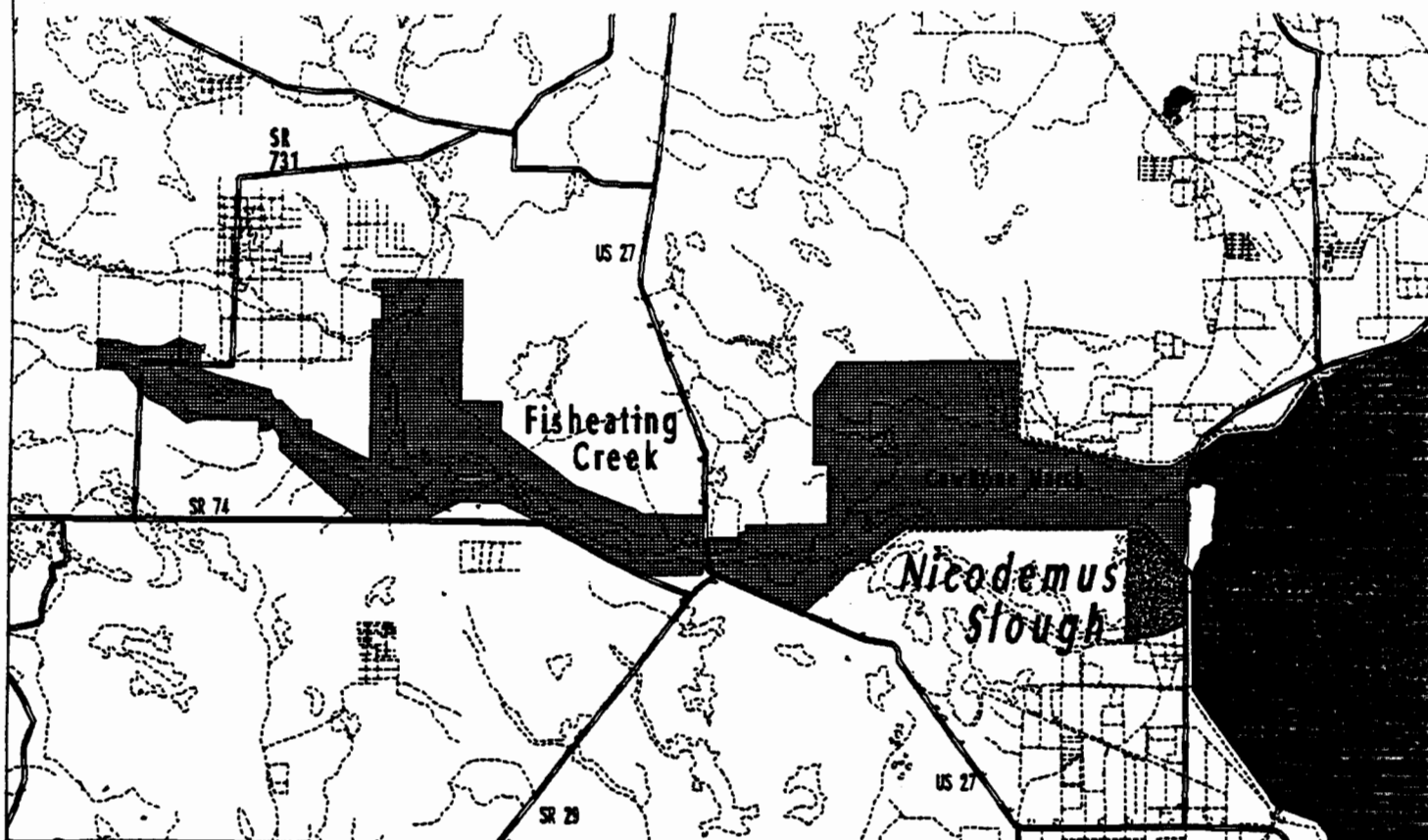
cooperative management program. If approved, the District will undertake all those activities related to habitat management, water quality and the manipulation of water levels in Nicodemus Slough. Such activities will include, but not be limited to, prescribed burning, exotic species control, water quality monitoring and biological monitoring. Water control structures will be operated to increase the use of the area by waterfowl and wading birds. Glades County will manage and regulate public use of the property for approved educational and outdoor recreation activities.

### **C. Public Recreation:**

Facilities will be provided to facilitate access to, and use of, Nicodemus Slough for fishing, picnicking, canoeing, hiking, nature observation and photography. Hunting, power boating (including airboating), and the use of off-road vehicles will be prohibited, as the area is too small and such activities would conflict with the District's restoration objectives.

Some unauthorized hunting has taken place on the property since it was acquired by the District, and there is local interest to open the area to airboat use. Some limited waterfowl hunting may be feasible in the future; however, the use of airboats and other types of motorized craft does not appear compatible with the goal of improving the habitat for waterfowl and wading birds, particularly in light of the limited size of the tract. The property is probably best suited for operation as a wildlife viewing area and should be limited to passive, non-consumptive activities.





- Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area



**Nicodemus Slough**

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

## Save Our Rivers Project

# SIX MILE CYPRESS I

County:	Lee
Total Project Area:	1,741 Acres <sup>1</sup>
Acres Acquired:	794
Land Cost:	\$1,520,321
Per Acre Cost:	\$1,914
Acres Remaining :	0 <sup>1</sup>

(See Also Six Mile Cypress II)

### 1. General Description

Six Mile Cypress Slough occupies approximately 2000 acres in Lee County, southeast of the City of Ft. Myers. It extends from State Road 82 southwesterly for approximately nine miles to Ten Mile Canal. The slough averages 1,500 feet in width. The Slough consists of cypress swamp, interspersed with numerous open ponds. It is fringed with pine flatwoods, transitional hardwoods, wet prairies, and Melaleuca. Melaleuca has become the dominant vegetation type south of Daniels Road.

### 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

#### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Lee County has agreed to develop, operate and maintain the slough as a nature preserve under an agreement with the District. A detailed description of the slough is contained in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Management Plan prepared by the County in 1986. Specific actions to implement the plan are set forth in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Land and Water Management Plan, prepared by the County and approved by the District in 1988.

Six Mile Cypress Basin is being studied as part of the Lee County Surface Water Management Master Plan. It will recommend design criteria to prevent further degradation and slough enhancement. A principal objective will be to restore a more natural hydroperiod to aid in the restoration of this ecological condition.

A water management plan has been prepared by the District as part of its local government assistance program. It will be used by the County to develop a water management program for the preserve.

Melaleuca and Brazilian Pepper are problem exotics that have proliferated in certain portions of the

slough. Native vegetation has been completely replaced by Melaleuca in approximately 200 acres. A vigorous eradication/control program involving chemical and mechanical applications is planned to halt the future spread of these species. Reforestation with native species will be undertaken where large stands of exotics are removed.

#### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

The entire perimeter of the slough is being posted to prevent unauthorized access, and problem areas are being fenced and/or barricaded. Routine patrol will be provided by preserve personnel and the Lee County Sheriff's Department.

A prescribed burning program is proposed for the pine flatwoods, north of Penzance Road, to maintain the species composition of this community and prevent the buildup of fuels that could result in damaging wildfires. Fire lanes will be constructed to facilitate the burns and to protect sensitive cypress and hardwood areas. Wildfires will be suppressed only when considered necessary to protect adjacent lands and highway travel, or when preserve resources would be subject to irreparable damage.

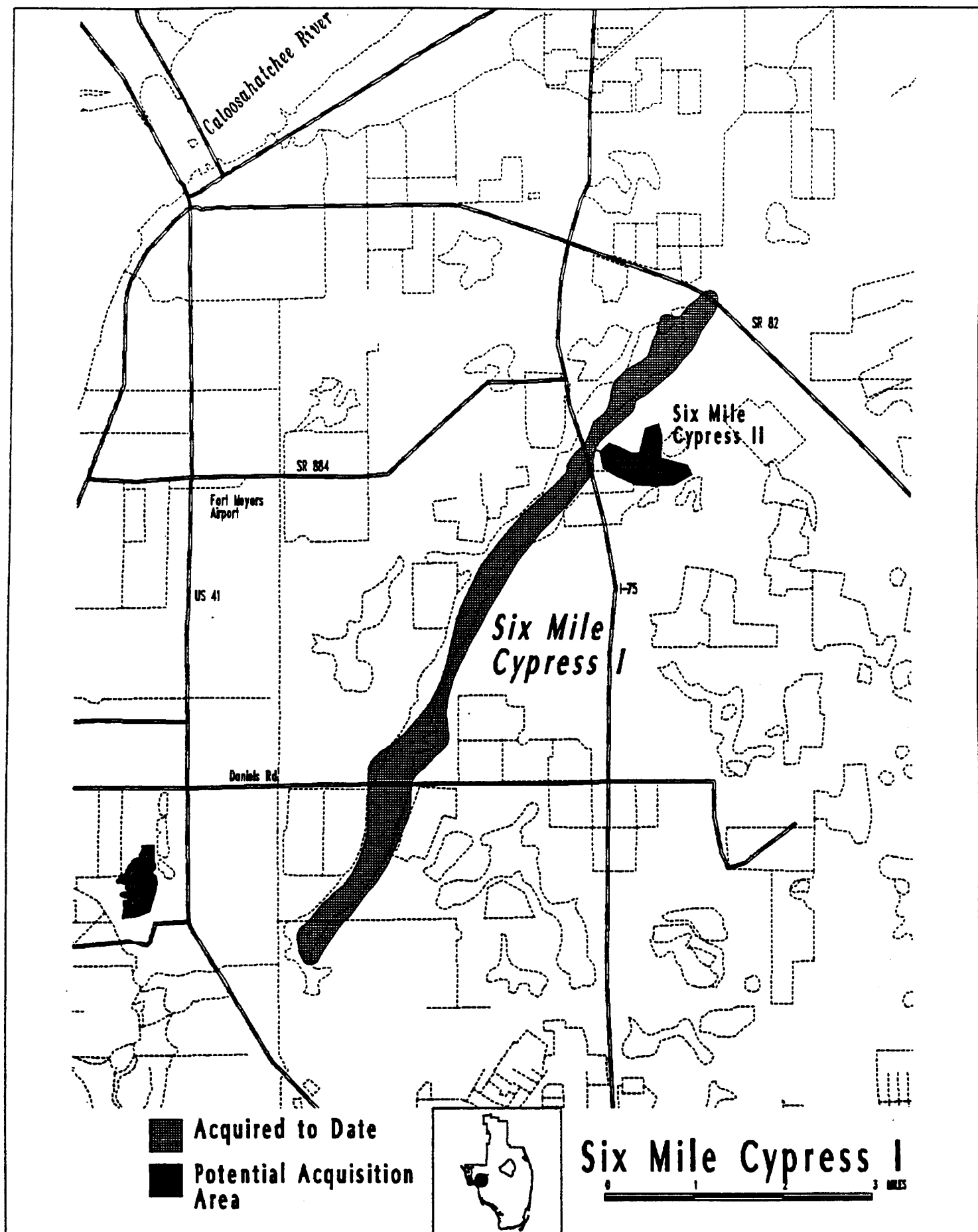
The USDA Soil Conservation Service will be conducting a study to determine if continued grazing is compatible with the objectives of the preserve. If so, an appropriate grazing plan will be prepared and implemented.

A complete list of wildlife species utilizing the slough is contained in the County's original management plan. Monitoring the occurrence of wildlife will be continued to determine if any changes in usage occurs. Consideration will be given to the needs of wildlife in reforestation efforts. Nest boxes will be installed to benefit cavity nesters, such as wood ducks, owls, and woodpeckers.

#### C. Public Recreation:

The slough has been used informally for both active and passive recreational activities for many years. The continuation of passive activities, such as fishing, picnicking, photography and nature observation will be encouraged in appropriate locations within the preserve. Interpretive facilities, consisting of an elevated boardwalk, covered amphitheater and parking area will be developed to enhance visitor appreciation of the preserve. Special programs will be conducted by the Lee County Parks and Recreation Department. The Lee County School Board Department of Environmental Education will continue its past practice of conducting field trips to the slough.

<sup>1</sup> SOR acquisition completed. Lee County to acquire remainder of Six Mile Cypress I.



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*Loxahatchee*

**Appendix A**  
**Florida Resource Rivers Act**  
**F. S. 373.59**

**373.59 Water Management Lands Trust Fund.--**

(1) There is established within the Department of Environmental Regulation the Water Management Lands Trust Fund to be used as a nonlapsing fund for the purposes of this section. The moneys in this fund are hereby continually appropriated for the purposes of land acquisition, management, maintenance, and capital improvements in accordance with the provisions of this section. Up to 10 percent of the moneys in the fund may be allocated annually to the districts for management, maintenance, and capital improvements pursuant to subsection (7). The districts may contract with state agencies to provide the management and maintenance services.

(2)(a) Subsequent to public hearings, similar to those held pursuant to s. 120.54, each district shall file a 5-year plan for acquisition with the Legislature and the Secretary of Environmental Regulation by January 15, 1982. Annually thereafter, each district shall file with the Legislature and the secretary a report of acquisition activity together with modifications or additions to its 5-year plan of acquisition. The report shall also include a description of land management activity. Expenditure of moneys from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund shall be limited to the costs for acquisition, management, maintenance, and capital improvements of lands included within the plan as filed by each district; however, no such acquisition of lands shall occur without a public hearing similar to those held pursuant to the provisions set forth in s. 102.54. In the annual update of its 5-year plan for acquisition, each district shall identify lands needed to protect or recharge groundwater and shall establish a plan for their acquisition as necessary to protect potable water supplies. Lands which serve to protect or recharge groundwater identified pursuant to this paragraph shall also serve to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation.

(b) Moneys from the fund shall be used for continued acquisition,

management, maintenance, and capital improvements of the following lands and lands set forth in the 5-year land acquisition plan of the district:

1. By South Florida Water Management District--lands in the water conservation areas and areas adversely affected by raising water levels of Lake Okeechobee in accordance with present regulation schedules, and the Savannahs Wetland area in Martin County and St. Lucie County.

2. By Southwest Florida Water Management District--lands in the Four River Basins areas, including Green Swamp, Upper Hillsborough and Cypress Creek, Anclote Water Storage Lands (Starkey), Withlacoochee and Hillsborough riverine corridors, and Sawgrass Lake addition.

3. By St. Johns River Water Management District--Seminole Ranch, Latt Maxey and Evans properties in the upper St. Johns River Basin.

4. By Suwannee River Water Management District--lands in Suwannee River Valley.

5. By Northwest Florida Water Management District--lands in the Choctawhatchee and Apalachicola River Valleys.

(3)(a) Moneys from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund shall be used for acquiring the fee or other interest in lands necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources, except that such moneys shall not be used for the acquisition of rights-of-way for canals or pipelines. Such moneys shall also be used for management, maintenance, and capital improvements. Lands acquired with moneys from the fund shall be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition.

(b) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Regulation shall release moneys from the Water Management Land Trust Fund to a district for preacquisition costs within 30 days after



receipt of a resolution adopted by the district's governing board which identifies and justifies any such preacquisition costs necessary for the purchase of any lands listed in the district's 5-year plan. The district shall return to the department any funds not used for the purposes stated in the resolution, and the department shall deposit the unused funds into the Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

(c) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Regulation shall release acquisition moneys from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund to a district following receipt of a resolution adopted by the governing board identifying the lands being acquired and certifying that such acquisition is consistent with the plan of acquisition and other provisions of this act. The governing board shall also provide to the Secretary of Environmental Regulation a copy of all certified appraisals used to determine the value of the land to be purchased. If the purchase price is greater than the appraisal price, the governing board shall submit written justification for the increased price. The Secretary of Environmental Regulation may withhold moneys for any purchase that is not consistent with the 5-year plan or the intent of this act or that is in excess of appraised value. The governing board may appeal any denial to the Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission pursuant to s. 373.114.

(d) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Regulation shall release to the district moneys for management, maintenance, and capital improvements following receipt of a resolution and request adopted by the governing board which specifies the designated managing agency, specific management activities, public use, estimated annual operating costs, and other acceptable documentation to justify release of moneys.

(4) Water management land acquisition costs shall include payments to owners and costs and fees associated with such acquisition.

(5) If a district issues revenue bonds or notes under s. 373.584, the district may

pledge its share of the moneys in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund as security for such bonds or notes. The Department of Environmental Regulation shall pay moneys from the trust fund to a district or its designee sufficient to pay the debt service, as it becomes due, on the outstanding bonds and notes of the district; however, such payments shall not exceed the district's cumulative portion of the trust fund. However, any moneys remaining after payment of the amount due on the debt service shall be released to the district pursuant to subsection (3).

(6) Any unused portion of a district's share of the fund shall accumulate in the trust fund to the credit of that district. Interest earned on such portion shall also accumulate to the credit of that district to be used for land acquisition, management, maintenance, and capital improvements as provided in this section. The total moneys over the life of the fund available to any district under this section shall not be reduced except by resolution of the district governing board stating that the need for the moneys no longer exists.

(7) Moneys from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund shall be allocated to the five water management districts in the following percentages:

(a) Thirty percent to the South Florida Water Management District.

(b) Twenty-five percent to the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

(c) Twenty-five percent to the St. Johns River Water Management District.

(d) Ten percent to the Suwannee River Water Management District.

(e) Ten percent to the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

(8) Beginning in fiscal year 1986-87, each district may use up to 10 percent of its allocation under subsection (7) for management, maintenance, and capital improvements. Capital improvements shall include, but need not be limited to, perimeter fencing, signs, firelanes, access roads and trails, and minimal public accommodations, such as primitive campsites, garbage receptacles, and toilets.

(9) Moneys in the fund not needed to meet current obligations incurred under this section shall be transferred to the State Board of Administration, to the credit of the fund, to be invested in the manner provided by law. Interest received on such investments shall be credited to the fund.

(10) Lands acquired for the purposes enumerated in this section shall also be used for general public recreational purposes. General public recreational purposes shall include, but not be limited to, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, swimming, camping, hiking, canoeing, boating, diving, birding, sailing, jogging, and other related outdoor activities to the maximum extent possible considering the environmental sensitivity and suitability of those lands. These public lands shall be evaluated for their resource value for the purpose of establishing which parcels, in whole or part, annually or seasonally, would be conducive to general public recreational purposes. Such findings shall be included in management plans which are developed for such public lands. These lands shall be made available to the public for these purposes, unless the district governing board can demonstrate that such activities would be incompatible with the purposes for which these lands were acquired.

(11) A district may dispose of land acquired under this section, pursuant to s. 373.089 or s. 373.056. However, revenue derived from such disposal may not be used for any purpose except the purchase of other lands meeting the criteria specified in this section or payment of debt service on revenue bonds or notes issued under s. 373.584, as provided in this section.

(12) No moneys generated pursuant to this act may be applied or expended subsequent to July 1, 1985, to reimburse any district for prior expenditures for land acquisition from ad valorem taxes or other funds other than its share of the funds provided herein or to refund or refinance outstanding debt payable solely from ad valorem taxes or

other funds other than its share of the funds provided herein.

*History.--ss. 3, 5, ch. 81-33; s. 36, ch. 83-218; s. 5, ch. 85-347; s. 4, ch. 86-22; s. 8, ch. 86-294.*



*Kissimmee*

**Appendix B**  
**Chapter 17-42**  
**Water Management Lands**  
**Trust Fund**

**CHAPTER 17-402  
WATER MANAGEMENT LANDS TRUST FUND**

- 17.402.001 Scope. (Formerly 17-42.001)
- 17.402.020 Definitions. (Formerly 17-42.020)
- 17.402.030 Release of Funds.  
(Formerly 17-42.030)
- 17.402.040 District Share of Acquisition Costs.  
(Repealed) (Formerly 17-42.040)
- 17.402.050 Financial Reports.  
(Formerly 17-42.050)
- 17.402.060 Water Management District Lands  
Trust Fund Bond Issues.  
(Formerly 17-42.060)

**17-402.001 Scope.**

This chapter provides the requirements and procedures for the release of moneys from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund to the water management districts for use in acquiring lands necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources, and for use in management, maintenance, and capital improvement of said lands.

Specific Authority: 373.043, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.026, 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

History: New 3-24-82. Formerly 17-42.01. Formerly 17-42.001. Amended 1-7-91

**17-402.020 Definitions.**

(1) "Acquisition Costs" shall mean direct costs actually incurred by a water management district in the acquisition of the fee or other legal interest in lands, including the purchase price and ancillary costs such as legal and title fees, surveying fees, appraisal and negotiation fees, environmental audits and personnel costs for these and related services and payments to owners.

(2) "Allocation" shall mean the district's share of the funds credited to each district during a year, pursuant to Section 373.59(7), Florida Statutes, plus any funds credited to the District in previous years which remain unencumbered by the district at the end of the year.

(3) "Bonds" shall mean any revenue bonds or notes for which a district has pledged its share, or a portion of its share, of the funds in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund as security.

(4) "Capital Improvements" shall include, but is not limited to, perimeter fencing, signs, firelanes, access roads, bridges and trails, structures, and minimal public accommodations,

such as primitive campsites, garbage receptacles, and toilets.

(5) "Debt Service" shall mean payments for principal and interest due on any bonds issued by the district.

(6) "Department" shall mean the Department of Environmental Regulation.

(7) "District" shall mean any one of the five water management districts listed in Subsection 373.59(7), Florida Statutes.

(8) "Funds" shall mean moneys in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

(9) "Lands" shall mean the real property in which the fee or other legal interest has been acquired or is intended to be acquired according to the provisions of Section 373.59, Florida Statutes.

(10) "Management and Maintenance" shall mean activities necessary to maintain lands in an environmentally acceptable manner, to restore and protect the natural state and condition of the lands, to provide use of lands for general public recreational purposes, and to provide use of renewable resources.

(11) "Preacquisition costs" shall mean those costs incurred by a water management district that are associated with preliminary and preparatory activities necessary for the district to pursue acquisition of the fee or other legal interest in lands pursuant to Section 373.59, Florida Statutes.

(12) "Year" shall mean the State fiscal year.

Specific Authority: 373.043, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.026, 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

History: New 3-24-82. Formerly 17-42.02. Amended 9-17-86. Formerly 17-42.020. Amended 1-7-91.

<sup>1</sup>REG file system Editor's Note: As filed with the Bureau of Administrative Code, Subsection 17-402.020 reads as printed above. However, in the Florida Administrative Code, the clause "except where some other period is specified" is not included in this definition.

**17-402.030 Release of Funds.**

(1) Funds may be released to the districts for preacquisition costs, acquisitions costs, and management, maintenance, and capital improvement costs as provided in (2)-(11), below; for payment of debt service on land acquisition bond issues as provided in Rule 17-402.060, FAC, and for other purposes where specified by state law.

(2) Each district may use up to 5 percent of its allocation from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund for preacquisition costs as defined herein. Preacquisition costs shall be requested in accordance with Section 373.59(3)(b), Florida Statutes, and subsections (3) and (4) below, as applicable. Payment of preacquisition costs is not predicated on consummation of an acquisition.

(3) A formal resolution adopted by the district governing board, together with a copy of all certified appraisals obtained by the district to determine the value of the land to be purchased, shall be submitted to the Department for release of funds requested by a district for land acquisition costs. Except as provided in subsections (9)-(11) below, the Department shall release funds to a district within a reasonable time, not to exceed 30 days, after the receipt of governing board resolution or, for lands to be acquired by eminent domain, after the receipt of a subsequent request from the district's legal counsel for the release of funds.

(4) The governing board resolution shall certify the following:

(a) The amount of funds being requested or, for lands acquired by eminent domain, that the district governing board has formally authorized condemnation proceedings and has delegated to its legal counsel the authority to request the release of funds sufficient to pay the acquisition costs of the district and the amount contained in any court orders awarding acquisition costs;

(b) The legal interest acquired or sought to be acquired in lands for which funds are requested;

(c) A legal description of the lands being acquired, along with a general visual representation on a map, and the total amount of acreage being acquired.

(d) That the acquisition of lands or interest therein for which funds are requested is consistent with the five-year plan of acquisition filed with the Legislature and the Department, and is consistent with Section 373.59(2), Florida Statutes.

(e) That the requested funds will only be used for the acquisition costs of lands;

(f) That lands acquired pursuant to this Chapter shall be made available for general public recreational uses which are not inconsistent with their water management purposes.

(g) That lands acquired pursuant to this Chapter shall be maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner, and to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and conditions;

(h) That should the district dispose of any lands or interests acquired pursuant to this Chapter, all revenues derived therefrom will be used to acquire other lands for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources; and

(i) That the purchase price of the lands to be acquired is:

1. less than or equal to the appraised value, based on the certified appraisals that were used to determine the value of lands to be purchased; or

2. greater than the appraised value, based on the certified appraisals that were used to determine the value of the lands to be purchased. The resolution shall state the justification for the increased price.

(5) All lands to be acquired, except those to be acquired by donation, shall be appraised by at least one independent real estate appraiser.

(6) Each district may use up to 10 percent of its allocation from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund for management, maintenance, and capital improvements.

(7) A formal resolution and request adopted by the district governing board shall be submitted to the Department for release of funds for management, maintenance, and capital improvements. Except as provided in subsections (9)-(11), below, the Department shall release funds to a district within a reasonable time, not to exceed 30 days, after the receipt of the governing board resolution and acceptable documentation to justify release of moneys.

(8) (a) The governing board resolution shall certify that the money is needed to reimburse the district for expenditures during a specified time period or to meet the reasonable expected cash needs of the district within the next 90 days and that the money was or will be used to:

1. manage and maintain lands in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition;

2. develop management plans which include an evaluation of the resource value,

environmental sensitivity and recreational suitability of these lands; and

3. make available to the public those lands suitable for general public recreational purposes, unless such use is demonstrated to be incompatible with the purposes for which the lands were acquired.

(b) The resolution shall specifically include:

1. The amount of money being requested;
2. The designated managing agency(s);
3. A detailed description of management, maintenance, and capital improvement activities, including an identification of specific lands, parcels, or projects on which the activities are occurring;
4. The estimated annual operating costs;
5. A statement that the proposed use of requested moneys is consistent with Section 373.59, Florida Statutes and Chapter 17-402, Florida Administrative Code; and
6. A statement that any revenue derived from the use and management of lands shall be utilized for purposes as provided in subsection (1).

(9) Upon receipt by the Secretary of the Department of a resolution specified in subsections (3) or (7), the Department shall review the resolution for consistency with the district's five year plan and the intent of Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, shall evaluate the justification for any preacquisition costs, shall evaluate the justification for any purchase price in excess of appraised value for acquisitions, and shall evaluate the justification for withholding lands from public use for land management requests. The Department shall also determine whether there are sufficient funds allocable to the district, in excess of funds reserved for bond issue debt service or reserve accounts, to pay the requested costs. Within 20 days of receipt of a resolution and all necessary documentation, the Secretary shall notify the district that either the funds will be released or that they will not be released. If funds will not be released, a written notice shall specify the reasons for withholding the moneys requested. If no notice is given, the release of funds shall be deemed to have been approved.

(10) Upon receipt of notice that the Secretary of the Department is withholding funds, the district governing board may, within 45 days, appeal such denial of funds to the Land and Water

Adjudicatory Commission. Notice of such appeal shall be provided in writing to the Secretary of the Department at the time such appeal is filed with the Commission.

(11) The funds for acquisition of lands shall not be requested by the districts more than 60 days prior to the anticipated closing date, or the anticipated date of deposit in the registry of the court in the case of eminent domain proceedings.

Specific Authority: 373.043, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.026, 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

History: New 3-24-82. Formerly 17-42.03. Amended 9-17-86. Formerly 17-42.030. Amended 1-7-91.

#### **17-402.040 District Share of Acquisition Costs.**

Specific Authority: 373.026, 373.043, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.026, 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

History: New 3-24-82. Repealed 9-17-86. Formerly 17-42.040.

#### **17-402.050 Financial Reports.**

The Department shall provide financial reports to the districts on a periodic basis and upon special request by a district

Specific Authority: 373.026, 373.043, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.026, 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

History: New 3-24-82. Formerly 17-42.05. Formerly 17-42.050.

#### **17.402.060 Water Management Lands Trust Fund Bond Issues.**

A district that issues revenue bonds pursuant to Section 373.584, Florida Statutes, shall comply with the provisions of this section.

(1) Prior to issuance of bonds, the district shall submit to the department a resolution authorizing issuance of such bonds.

(2) At least 14 days prior to issuance of bonds, including issuance of additional bonds authorized under a previous resolution, the district shall enter into a written agreement with the Department that shall set forth the following:

- (a) the debt service schedule which contains the actual amounts of the payments for principal and interest to be paid and the dates for payment, and
- (b) the name and address of the registrar and paying agent and the terms for transfer of funds to the paying agent.



(3) The debt service schedule shall be structured in a manner to provide reasonable assurance that required payments will not exceed anticipated revenues for that purpose.

(4) After receipt by the Department of the district's resolution authorizing issuance of bonds, and the signed written agreement, the district shall, commencing on the date of issuance of the bonds or such prior date as may be agreed to by the Department and the district, set aside and escrow from the first available fund in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund that are allocable to the district, sufficient funds to pay the principal and interest on the bonds that shall become due for the 12 month period commencing with the date of issuance, or more if required by the Bond Agreement. The district shall similarly set aside and escrow funds for each following 12 month period in accordance with the agreement until the entire issue is retired. In the event that the district, by prior agreement with the Department, may choose not to set aside and escrow funds as described herein, the Department shall fulfill the requirements of this subsection.

(5) In the event that in any one year the funds in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund allocable to the district are insufficient to pay the debt service on the bonds as it becomes due, the Department shall make up such deficiency first from reserve funds from bond proceeds and then from the next available funds in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund allocable to the district until the debt service payments are brought current. If any reserve funds from bond proceeds are used to pay such deficiencies, the reserve funds from bond proceeds shall be replenished to the level set forth in the bond agreement before additional funds are accrued for debt service payments.

(6) The district shall notify the Department if it purchases, redeems or refunds bonds from any surplus or other account; makes any modifications to the terms of the bonds that may affect the debt service payment amounts or schedule; or makes an assignment of its registrar or paying agent agreement. Where appropriate the district shall submit an amended debt service schedule to the Department to reflect such modifications. Any change in the debt service schedule shall be submitted to the Department at least 45 days prior to the date first payment on the amended schedule is due.

(7) Any moneys in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund allocable to the district in excess

of the amounts set aside for payment of debt service on the bond issue, or for other accounts as provided in Rule 17-402.060(2), FAC, may be utilized and withdrawn in accordance with Rule 17-402.030, FAC.

(8) After the district has issued the bonds and the Department has undertaken payment of the debt service on such bonds, the district shall submit to the Department a separate formal resolution adopted by the governing board for each individual land acquisition that is made using proceeds from the bonds or interest earned on such proceeds. Such resolution shall conform to the requirements set forth for land acquisitions in Rule 17-402.030(4), FAC, and shall have a copy of all certified appraisals obtained by the district to determine the value of the land to be acquired attached. The district shall not disburse funds for the acquisition prior to the expiration of the 20 day review period set forth in Rule 17-402.030(9), FAC, and in the event the Secretary of the Department disapproves such purchase pursuant to Rule 17-402.030(9), FAC, the district shall not disburse funds for an acquisition unless and until the Secretary's decision is reversed on appeal by the Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission.

(9) The creation by the Department of any district accounts in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund for payment of debt service on bonds or for other purposes shall not require actual segregation of funds for those purposes so long as adequate accounting is made for funds reserved for each purpose.

Specific Authority: 373.043, 373.59, F.S.

Law Implemented: 373.016, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.

History: New- 9-17-86. Formerly 17-42.060. Amended 1-7-91.



*Corkscrew*

**Appendix C**  
**Florida Preservation 2000 Act**

**259.101 Florida Preservation 2000 Act -**

(1) **SHORT TITLE** - This section may be cited as the "Florida Preservation 2000 Act."

(2) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS** - The Legislature finds and declares that:

(a) The alteration and development of Florida's natural areas to accommodate its rapidly growing population have contributed to the degradation of water resources, the fragmentation and destruction of wildlife habitats, the loss of recreation space, and the diminishment of wetlands and forests.

(b) Imminent development of Florida's remaining natural areas and continuing increases in land values necessitate an aggressive program of public land acquisition during the next decade to preserve the quality of life that attracts so many people to Florida.

(c) Acquisition of public lands should be based on a comprehensive assessment of Florida's natural resources and planned so as to protect the integrity of ecological systems and to provide multiple benefits, including preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, recreation space, and water recharge areas. Governmental agencies responsible for public land acquisition should work together to purchase lands jointly and to coordinate individual purchases within ecological systems.

(3) **LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAMS SUPPLEMENTED** - Less the costs of issuance, the costs of funding reserve accounts, and other costs with respect to the bonds, the proceeds of bonds issued pursuant to this act shall be deposited into the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund created by s. 375.045. No bonds shall be issued in fiscal year 1990-1991 pursuant to this act unless there is specific authorization for the issuance of such bonds in the act implementing the 1990-1991 General Appropriations Act. The proceeds of any bonds deposited into the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall be distributed by the Department of Natural Resources in the following manner:

(a) Fifty percent to the Department of Natural Resources for the purchase of public lands as described in s. 253.023. Of this 50 percent, at least one-fifth shall be used for the acquisition of coastal lands.

(b) Thirty percent to the Department of Environmental Regulation for the purchase of water management lands pursuant to s. 373.59, to be distributed among the water management districts as provided in that section.

(c) Ten percent to the Department of Community Affairs to provide land acquisition grants and loans to local governments through the Florida Communities Trust pursuant to part III of chapter 380. Of this 10 percent, one-half shall be matched by local governments on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

(d) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Department of Natural Resources for the purchase of inholdings and additions to state parks. For the purposes of this paragraph, 'state park' means all real property in the state under the jurisdiction of the Division of Recreation and Parks of the Department of Natural Resources, or which may come under its jurisdiction.

(e) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to fund the acquisition of state forest inholdings and additions pursuant to s. 589.07.

(f) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to fund the acquisition of inholdings and additions to lands managed by the commission which are important to the conservation of fish and wildlife.

(g) One and three-tenths percent to the Department of Natural Resources for the Florida Rails to Trails Program, to acquire abandoned railroad rights-of-way for use as public recreational trails.

Local governments may use federal grants or loans, private donations, or environmental mitigation funds, including environmental mitigation funds required pursuant to s. 338.250, for any part or all of any local match required for the purposes described in this subsection. Bond proceeds allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) may be used to purchase lands on the priority lists developed pursuant to s. 259.035. Title to lands purchased pursuant to paragraphs (a), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g) shall be vested in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. Paragraphs (a) and (b) are repealed effective October 1, 2000, and paragraphs (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g) are repealed effective October 1, 1992. Prior to each repeal, the Legislature shall review the provisions scheduled for repeal and shall determine whether to reenact or modify the provisions or to take no action.

(4) **PROJECT CRITERIA** -

(a) Proceeds of bonds issued pursuant to this act and distributed pursuant to paragraphs (3)(a) and (b) shall be spent only on projects which

meet at least one of the following criteria, as determined pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c):

1. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of development.

2. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of subdivision which will result in multiple ownership and may make acquisition of the project more costly or less likely to be accomplished;

3. The value of a significant portion of the land in the project is likely to appreciate at a rate that makes purchasing the land immediately with bond proceeds more cost-effective than delaying its purchase until acquisition funds which are not bonded are available for the project;

4. A significant portion of the land in the project serves to protect or recharge groundwater and to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation;

5. The project can be purchased at 80 percent of appraised value or less; or

6. A significant portion of the land in the project serves as habitat for endangered or threatened species or serves to protect endangered natural communities.

(b) Each year that bonds are to be issued pursuant to this act, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council shall review that year's approved Conservation and Recreation Lands priority list and shall, by the first board meeting in February, present to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for approval a listing of projects on the list which meet one or more of the criteria listed in paragraph (a). The board may remove projects from the list developed pursuant to this paragraph, but may not add projects.

(c) Each year that bonds are to be issued pursuant to this act, each water management district governing board shall review the lands on its current year's Save Our Rivers 5-year plan and shall, by January 15, adopt a listing of projects from the plan which meet one or more of the criteria listed in paragraph (a).

When a nonprofit environmental organization which is tax exempt pursuant to s. 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code sells land to the state, such land at the time of such sale shall be deemed to meet one or more of the criteria listed in paragraph (a) if such land meets one or more of the criteria at the time the organization purchases it. Listings of projects compiled pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) may be revised to include

projects on the Conservation and Recreation Lands priority list or in a water management district's 5-year plan which come under the criteria in paragraph (a) after the dates specified in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c). The requirement of paragraph (3)(a) regarding coastal lands is met as long as an average of one-fifth of the cumulative proceeds allocated through fiscal year 1999-2000 pursuant to that paragraph is used to purchase coastal lands.

(5) Any funds received by the Division of Forestry from the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund pursuant to paragraph (3)(e) shall be used only to pay the cost of the acquisition of lands in furtherance of outdoor recreation and natural resources conservation in this state. The administration and use of any funds received by the Division of Forestry from the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund will be subject to such terms and conditions imposed thereon by the agency of the state responsible for the issuance of the revenue bonds, the proceeds of which are deposited in the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund including restrictions imposed to ensure that the interest on any such revenue bonds issued by the state as tax-exempt revenue bonds will not be included in the gross income of the holders of such bonds for federal income tax purposes. All deeds or leases with respect to any real property acquired with funds received by the Division of Forestry from the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall contain such covenants and restrictions as are sufficient to ensure that the use of such real property at all times complies with s. 375.051 and s. 9, Art. XII of the 1968 Constitution of Florida; and shall contain reverter clauses providing for the reversion of title to such property to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund or, in the case of a lease of such property, providing for termination of the lease upon a failure to use the property conveyed thereby for such purposes.

History - s. 1 Ch. 90-217



*Six Mile Cypress*

## **Appendix D**

**Chapter 40 E-7 FAC  
Rules of the South Florida  
Water Management District**



# Rules of the South Florida Water Management District

## MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

### Chapter 40E-7

#### PART I WATER MANAGEMENT LANDS TRUST FUND

- 40E-7.111 General
- 40E-7.121 Definitions
- 40E-7.131 Selection of Lands - Five Year Plan
- 40E-7.141 Acquisition Procedures -Negotiations
- 40E-7.151 Acquisition Procedures -  
Condemnation
- 40E-7.161 Surveys
- 40E-7.171 Appraisals
- 40E-7.181 Funding
- 40E-7.191 Disposition of Surplus Land

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.046, 373.056, 373.083, 373.084,  
 373.086, 373.089, 373.099, 373.103,  
 373.139, 373.59, Chapters 73 and 74,  
 F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended 8-14-88.

#### 40E-7.121 Definitions.

When used in this chapter:

(1) "Department" means Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.  
 (2) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.  
 (3) "District" means the South Florida Water Management District or its successor agency.

(4) "Board" means the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board.

(5) "Fund" means the Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

(6) "Plan" means the five year plan as approved by the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District.

(7) "Project" means a parcel or parcels of land in a discrete unit of purchase.

(8) "Survey" means a certified survey signed by a licensed land surveyor authorized to practice surveying in the State of Florida.

(9) "Acquisition" means the reduction of the title to land to be acquired to fee or such other legal interest necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources.

(10) "Capital improvement" shall mean those improvements including but not limited to perimeter fencing, signs, firelanes, access roads and trails, and minimal public accommodations, such as primitive campsites, garbage receptacles, and toilets.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.046, 373.056, 373.083, 373.084,  
 373.086, 373.089, 373.099, 373.103,  
 373.019, 373.139, 373.59, Chapters 73  
 and 74, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended 8-14-88.

#### PART II PROCEDURES FOR CONTRACTING OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

- 40E-7.201 Policy and Purpose
- 40E-7.203 Qualifying Procedures
- 40E-7.205 Competitive Selection
- 40E-7.207 Competitive Negotiations
- 40E-7.208 Inconsistency with Section 287.055,  
Florida Statutes
- 40E-7.209 Prohibition Against Contingency  
Fees
- 40E-7.210 Reservation of Rights
- 40E-7.211 Resolution of Contract Bidding  
Protest
- 40E-7.212 Inconsistency with Section 120.53(5),  
Florida Statutes

#### PART I WATER MANAGEMENT LANDS TRUST FUND

#### 40E-7.111 General.

The purpose of the rule in this part is to implement the legislative intent expressed in Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, and therefore, to establish District policies and procedures regarding a five year plan for the selection of land, and provide procedures for the acquisition and management of land, title to which shall vest in the District. It is also the intent of these rules to provide uniform acquisition procedures in order to effectuate efficient legal methods in accordance with sound business practices.

#### 40E-7.131 Selection of Lands - Five Year Plan.

(1) The District shall adopt a five year plan designating the areas of land to be acquired, which shall be filed with the legislature and the Secretary by January 15, 1982. Annually thereafter, modifications or additions to the five



year plan shall be filed with the legislature and the Secretary.

(2) Prior to the adoption, amendment or modification of the five year plan, the District shall hold one or more public hearings.

(3) Acquisition activity for the preceding fiscal year shall be reported annually to the legislature and the Secretary by January 15 of each year.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82.

#### 40E-7.141 Acquisition Procedures - Negotiations.

(1) Upon determination of land requirements, descriptions and maps sufficient to identify the lands to be acquired shall be prepared.

(2) Ownership information shall be obtained and reviewed in order to determine the title to the land being acquired.

(3) The District shall obtain at least one written appraisal pursuant to Rule 40E-7.171.

(4) The District shall attempt to acquire each parcel through voluntary negotiation prior to commencement of proceedings in eminent domain.

(5) All contracts to purchase shall be reduced to writing and shall be contingent upon approval by the Board.

(6) The District shall attempt to negotiate the acquisition of desired parcels in accordance with the following procedure:

(a) Each owner or authorized representative shall be contacted with an offer to acquire.

(b) A "Negotiation Report" may be prepared and forwarded to Office of Counsel, which shall summarize such negotiations, including the amount of offer made by the District, and any counter-offer made by the property owner.

(c) In the event an offer is accepted by an owner or a counter-offer is accepted by the District, the District shall:

1. Arrange for the proper execution and recording of all necessary documents, and

2. Request Office of Counsel to prepare a resolution requesting the Board to approve the necessary funds pursuant to Rule 17-42.03.

(d) When a negotiated settlement cannot be readily attained, an authorized officer shall send a memorandum to Office of Counsel which shall include:

1. A request for a resolution to institute eminent domain proceedings,

2. Identification of parcels by title memorandum number, and

3. Legal interest or estate considered for acquisition.

(e) In the event a property owner, or authorized representative, makes an offer to the District prior to the District obtaining an appraisal, the District may accept such offer or make a counter-offer subject to obtaining such appraisal.

(7) The District may accept donations of land. In such event the provisions of subsection (6) shall be followed, except that appraisals may be waived upon concurrence of both the landowner and the District.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.056, 373.083, 373.086, 373.099, 373.103, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended 8-14-88.

#### 40E-7.151 Acquisition Procedures - Condemnation.

(1) Proceedings in eminent domain shall not be commenced until authorized by the Board, with the advice and consent of the appropriate Basin Board whenever Basin funds will be utilized for such acquisition.

(2) The Board may adopt a resolution authorizing the institution of eminent domain proceedings, which shall include the following when applicable:

(a) identification of the project for which the property is being acquired and its location,

(b) a statement by the Board finding that the project is necessary and in the public interest,

(c) a statement that acquisition of lands for the project by eminent domain is necessary,

(d) a statement of the legal authority for the project and the acquisition of lands,

(e) identification of the lands to be acquired, the nature of the legal interest sought, and adoption of project maps, if available, and

(f) a statement authorizing and directing Office of Counsel to institute eminent domain proceedings and proceedings by way of Declaration of Taking.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.59, Chapters 73 and 74, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82.

#### 40E-7.161 Surveys.

(1) In order to determine the location, acreage and legal description of land to be acquired, the District may obtain a survey.

(2) In the event a survey is not obtained, the District shall then use the best available data

in order to arrive at the boundaries and acreage of the land to be acquired.

(3) All surveys shall meet the minimum technical standard for land surveying in the State of Florida as adopted by the Florida State Board of Land Surveyors.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.056, 373.083, 373.086, 373.099, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82.

#### 40E-7.171 Appraisals.

(1) All lands to be acquired shall be appraised by at least one real estate appraiser, except as provided in Section 40E-7.141(7).

(2) Prior to contracting with the District, each appraiser selected shall submit an affidavit substantiating that such appraiser has no vested or fiduciary interest in the property to be appraised, except for the professional fee.

(3) After a contract between the District and the appraiser has been executed, the District shall transmit all pertinent data to the appraiser regarding the assignment.

(4) All appraisals shall be kept confidential subject to the provisions of Section 373.139(3), F.S.

(5) If approved by the Executive Director or his designee, District reviewed appraisals from other government agencies or non-profit organizations cooperating with the District on acquisition may also be used to establish just compensation values.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.083, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 40E-7.181 Funding.

(1) For lands acquired by negotiation and purchase, the Board shall request the Department to release monies from the fund by adopting a resolution which shall comply with Chapter 17-42, Florida Administrative Code.

(2) For lands acquired by eminent domain, subsequent to the adoption of a resolution authorizing eminent domain proceedings, the Board shall adopt a resolution pursuant to subsection (1), which in addition shall authorize the Executive Director or other staff officer to request monies from the Fund as follows:

(a) A request from the District for funds sufficient to pay the owner the amount specified in the final judgment or the stipulation and order,

(b) A request from the District for funds sufficient to pay the amount specified in the court's order or the stipulation and order for any

costs and fees of the owner, whether incurred in the trial court or an appeal, and

(c) A request from the District for reimbursement of all costs and fees incurred by the District associated with such acquisition.

(3) The District shall request the Department to release funds specified in subsection (2) within a sufficient time to allow the District to comply with section 73.111, Florida Statutes.

(4) For the management, maintenance and capital improvements to lands acquired, the Board shall request the Department to release monies from the Fund by adopting a resolution which specifies the designated managing agency, specific management activities, public use, estimated annual operating costs, and other acceptable documentation to justify the release of monies. The District may contract with state agencies to provide the management and maintenance services.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.056, 373.083, 373.086, 373.099, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended 8-14-88.

#### 40E-7.191 Disposition of Surplus Land.

(1) The District may sell or exchange District lands which have been acquired with funds from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. District lands are considered surplus when:

(a) They are not required for District or project purposes pursuant to section 373.590, Florida Statutes,

(b) They have no apparent present or future utility in the land management program of the District, and

(c) They have been declared surplus by the Board.

(2) Surplus land shall be disposed of in accordance with the procedures set forth in Rule 40E-9.955.

(3) All funds received from the sale of surplus lands shall be used to purchase other lands meeting the criteria specified in section 373.59, Florida Statutes.

(4) All lands exchanged shall be in return for other lands meeting the criteria specified in section 373.59, Florida Statutes.

*Specific Authority* 373.044, 373.113, F.S.  
*Law Implemented* 373.056, 373.083, 373.089, 373.099, 373.139, 373.59, F.S.  
*History--New* 7-18-82, Amended 8-14-88.



*Kissimmee*

## **Appendix E**

### **Rules and Policies**

- 4.100 SOR Land Selection And Acquisition**
- 4.200 Negotiating Strategy For Land Acquisition Program**
- 5.001 Land Management Policy**



## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**Policy No. 4.100**

**Page 2 of 16**

**Effective: 11/85**

**Revised: 08/90**

### **SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY**

#### **A. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. The Governing Board recognizes a need to provide guidelines for selecting projects to be considered under the Resource Rivers Act (Section 373.59 Florida Statutes), which is also known as the Save Our Rivers Program. These guidelines include procedures for project selection and land acquisition and are intended as an addition and complementary to Rule 40E-7, Florida Administration Code.
2. It is the Governing Board's intention to implement the Save Our Rivers Program in a manner that will provide long-term benefit to the citizens living within the District as well as the water resources of the District.
3. The Governing Board recognizes that the Program's resources are limited and that land acquisition under the Program will primarily be on a willing seller basis.
4. It is the goal of this Program to identify, prioritize and acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources.
5. In compliance with Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, the District will file an annual five-year plan with the Department of Environmental Regulation and the Florida Legislature.
6. Funding for the Save Our Rivers Program is derived from revenue and Preservation 2000 Bond proceeds collected from the documentary stamp tax and it is administered by the Department of Environmental Regulation as provided for by Rule 17-42, Florida Administration Code.
7. To most effectively administer the Save Our Rivers Program, the District will closely coordinate with all other public land acquisition programs.
8. Through its regulatory programs, the District shall apply the same regulatory criteria to lands being considered for acquisition/protection under the SOR program, as it does to similar lands not being considered for acquisition/protection.



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**Policy No. 4.100**

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**Effective: 11/85**

**Revised: 08/90**

### **SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY**

The District's regulatory program shall not be used solely to reduce or control value of lands to be considered for acquisition/protection under the SOR Program, notwithstanding normal effects of regulations on land values.

9. It is the policy of the Governing Board that inclusion of a property in the Five-Year Plan, pursuant to Section 373.59, F.S., does not reflect a definite intention by the South Florida Water Management District to acquire said property. Inclusion in the Five-Year Plan indicates that the subject property has acquisition potential depending upon further investigation as to its water resources, environmental and management features and negotiation of a mutually acceptable acquisition price.
10. The acquisition cost shall be the purchase price plus ancillary cost as listed below.

#### **SOR Ancillary Cost:**

- a. Appraisal Contract
- b. Risk Assessment Contract
- c. Title Insurance
- d. Closing Cost
- e. Boundary Survey and Legal Descriptions
- f. Staff Time for Direct Negotiations
- g. Management and Review of Appropriate Contracts  
and Title Insurance Contracts
- h. Management and Review of Risk Assessment Contracts
- i. Staff Time for Legal Support
- j. Travel (Directly connected with a specific acquisition)



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### SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY

#### **B. SCOPE**

This policy will apply to all projects selected under the Save Our Rivers Program.

#### **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

##### **1. DEFINITIONS**

- a. *Acquisition* - acquiring title to land in fee; or in the discretion of the District, such other legal interest necessary for water management, water supply, or the conservation and protection of water resources.
- b. *Board* - the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District.
- c. *Department* - the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.
- d. *District* - the South Florida Water Management District.
- e. *Plan* - the Five Year Plan as approved by the.
- f. *Secretary* - the secretary of the Department.
- g. *Selection* - the process of identifying and evaluating proposed projects for inclusion in the plan..
- h. *SOR* - the Save Our Rivers Program as provided under Section 373.59 F.S.
- i. *SOR Project*- a geographical area possessing unique features necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources.
- j. *Florida Preservation 2000* - Section 259.101, Florida Section, providing for the proceeds of bonds deposited in the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund and for criteria for certain projects financed by such proceeds.





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### **SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY**

- 2. SELECTION COMMITTEE:** A committee shall be established and composed of the following District staff members to make recommendation to the Board for selection of projects for inclusion in the plan:
- a. Director, Department of Planning
  - b. Director, Department of Regulation
  - c. Director, Department of Research and Evaluation
  - d. Director, Department of Operations and Maintenance
  - e. Director, Department of Land Management
  - f. Deputy Executive Director
  - g. District Counsel
  - h. Director, Department of Construction Management
  - i. Director, Department of Finance and Administration

Each committee member may designate a specific staff member to function as the representative on all committee work.

The Committee Chairman will be the Deputy Executive Director and Vice Chairman will be the Director of Land Management.

The committee shall be responsible for receiving and evaluating all suggestions for selection of projects under the Save Our Rivers Program. In addition, the committee shall provide direction to the Save Our Rivers Program for the Development of policies. This includes the incorporation and prioritization of the projects currently on the District's Strategic Plan with the Save Our Rivers Five Year Plan and the administration of Preservation 2000 requirements. All proposals to the Board for selection shall originate from the committee; all suggestions for selection shall be submitted to the committee. The committee shall meet at least twice a year to consider all suggestions for selection and to prepare a plan of proposed projects. In order for a suggested project to receive approval for consideration on the plan proposed by the committee, it must be nominated by one committee member and have votes of approval by at least five committee members. Should any members of the committee have a direct or indirect, present or contemplated future interest in a parcel proposed or could personally benefit from the acquisition of the parcel, the member shall not participate in discussion, vote or other action in regard to that parcel. The Board may consider appeals on any project proposed to the committee but not recommended to the Board by the committee.



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### SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY

The public meetings of the Selection Committee shall be widely publicized. Minutes summarizing all comments made at the meetings shall be prepared and distributed to all committee members.

#### **D. PROJECT SELECTION GUIDELINES**

1. **TYPES OF PROJECTS:** Projects considered necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources and thus eligible for selection include but are not limited to:
  - a. river and stream flood plains
  - b. river and stream flood ways
  - c. river and stream flood hazard areas
  - d. river and stream littoral areas
  - e. springs
  - f. lakes including littoral zones
  - g. aquifer recharge area
  - h. wetlands,
  - i. well fields,
  - j. unique water features,
  - k. appropriate buffer zones qualifying for a - j
  - l. lands needed to retain or store water, or
  - m. remainders of land ownerships included in a - l
2. **SOR PROJECT PROPOSAL:** The SOR Projected Proposal Form shall be completed and submitted to the District for consideration of any proposed project.
3. **EVALUATION MATRIX:** The project Evaluation Matrix is used to screen and categorize prospective additions to the Five Year Plan. Based on the Project Ranking Criteria and Guidelines for Site Priority Ranking, each project will be scored on a 1-5 scale for each parameter. In addition, weighting factors, or multipliers, have been added to certain high priority parameters. The first phase, or Category I parameters, deal strictly with water resource related issues.

#### **CATEGORY I**

PARAMETER		WEIGHTING FACTOR
a.	Water Management	5
b.	Water Supply	5



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#### c. Conservation and Protection of Water Resources

5

Each project will be screened by the parameters in Category I first. After the initial screening is complete, seven additional factors in Category II will be evaluated. Those include:

#### CATEGORY II

<u>PARAMETER</u>	<u>WEIGHTING FACTOR</u>
d. Manageability	2
e. Habitat Diversity	2
f. Species Diversity	1
g. Connectedness	2
h. Rarity	2
i. Vulnerability	1
j. Nature Oriented Human Use	1

It is intended that project scoring be conducted by a team of reviewers, each of whom is familiar with all the projects. In this manner, any personal biases will carry through all the projects, rather than only reflect in one or two. All projects will be rated against each other so comparisons can be made among parcels, rather than adhering to a strict set of criteria for scoring purposes.

Based on this matrix, the SOR projects have been separated into two categories:

**Category A Projects:** Category A projects are those lands which received the highest relative scores when compared with all parcels evaluated for consideration for the Five Year Plan. These projects represent the best examples of lands within the District necessary for water management, water supply and conservation and protection of water resources.

**Category B Projects:** Category B projects are those parcels that meet the qualifications of the Save Our Rivers Program but ranked lower in relative score to all projects evaluated for consideration in the Five Year Plan. Should landowners contact the District regarding the sale of their lands in these project areas, an attempt will be made to secure those rights as a gift or a bargain sale.

**Legislatively Mandated Projects:** In 1981, when Florida Resources Rivers Act was passed, the Florida Legislature specified that three projects within the



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South Florida Water Management District be considered for purchase with the monies from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

- a. Water Conservation Areas
- b. Nicodemus Slough
- c. Savannahs

#### **4. SOR SELECTION CRITERIA FOR WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS:**

##### **Application**

These criteria apply to projects designed primarily to supply off-site water resource benefits. Thus, evaluation is performed not on the lands themselves, as with the resource-based matrix, but consider the use to which the lands would be put in context with a described project. Examples for benefits provided by such lands would be:

- a. Distribution systems to simulate sheet flow inputs into wetlands systems.
- b. Retention systems operated to simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into natural wetlands, lakes or estuaries.
- c. Water quality treatment system utilizing managed or unmanaged wetland/marsh vegetation process.
- d. Groundwater recharge and/or water table control to facilitate recharge to aquifers or retain seepage from water storage facilities.
- e. Buffer, access or transitional areas necessary to protect core lands from adverse impacts, provide wildlife corridors, provide for public enjoyment of the core land, or isolate certain management practices such as flooding and prescribed burning.

##### **Criteria**

Any land acquisition would require prior Governing Board approval of the subject plan.

- a. Proposed project lands are identified in a District Plan such as WUMP or SWIM, and



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- b. Subject lands would be utilized to provide simulated or naturally functioning water resource quality/quantity benefits, and
- c. Lands would be part of the project resulting in net increase of natural resource values, when considering both any on-site losses and off-site gains, and
- d. Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs and pumps shall be limited to only those necessary to achieve the proposed water resource benefits, and
- e. All appropriate funding sources for acquisition have been identified.

### E. LAND ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

#### 1. GENERAL CRITERIA

- a. All projects on the plan shall be evaluated to determine the nature and extent of land interests that are necessary for acquisition in order to achieve the purposes for which the project was included in the plan.
- b. In order to maximize the overall benefits of the SOR Program, the District shall seek to acquire only the quality of the title necessary to achieve project purposes.

#### 2. ACQUISITION PRIORITY

An acquisition priority analysis is conducted annually by the Land Management Department as part of the Five Year Plan preparation. The purpose of the analysis is to structure and direct the acquisition resources of the District. The criteria used to prioritize SOR projects are:

- a. Standing on District Strategic Plan
- b. Potential for Resource Loss
- c. Potential for Cooperative Acquisition
- d. Disposition of Owner(s)

#### 3. NOTIFICATION OF OWNERS

As owners are identified in an approved Five Year Plan project, a notification letter will be mailed to them. The letter will briefly describe the program objectives and provide a focal point for future questions and discussion.



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### **F. NEGOTIATION GUIDELINES**

Negotiation strategies for SOR acquisitions are detailed in Administrative Policy and Procedures 4.200.

#### **1. CONSIDERATION OF APPRAISALS:**

- a) After review and approval by the District's Real Estate Division, the Executive Director or his designee authorizes the use of a District appraisal for purchase negotiations with the appropriate land owners.
- b) If approved by the Executive Director or his designee, appraisals from other government agencies or non-profit organizations cooperating with the District on acquisition may also be used to establish just compensation values after review and approval by the District's Real Estate Division to establish just compensation.
- c) Two approved appraisals are required for all SOR acquisitions parcels which exceed \$500,000 based on preliminary value estimates by the District's chief real estate review appraiser. However, the Director of the Land Management Department or his designee may require two appraisals for any parcels estimated at less than \$500,000 to establish just compensation value in complex situations or for other extenuating circumstances.
- d) The District's review appraisal report determines the just compensation value for all proposed acquisitions and resolves differences among two or more appraisals on any specific land parcel.
- e) An updated appraisal(s) is required every two years to account for long delays in the negotiating process. Updates in less than two years should be utilized by negotiators to account for rapidly changing values or other market conditions. Updates are recommended by the land acquisition negotiator and approved by the Appraisal Selection Committee. Authorization to proceed with negotiations using the updated appraisal is the same as a first appraisal.
- f) When a fee simple estate is acquired subject to outstanding interests such as a mineral interest, life estate, easement or lease, the purchase price shall be reduced in accordance with the affect the outstanding interests have upon the market value of the lands.





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2. **PURCHASE:** SOR Director shall present a recommendation to the Board for approval of an offer to purchase according to Rule 40E 7.181.
3. **EMINENT DOMAIN:** When efforts to acquire lands through negotiation have been unsuccessful, the Board may authorize the use of eminent domain, where applicable.
4. **RECORDS:** Records of all contacts with property owners shall be retained in the Department of Land Management.

#### G. PREPARATION OF FIVE YEAR PLAN:

An Acquisition Plan and Status Report shall be prepared by the committee and presented to the Governing Board annually, or more frequently, if considered necessary by the Board or the committee.

1. **THE ACQUISITION PLAN** shall include a written report of the favorable and unfavorable merits of each project selected for acquisition consideration and shall consider and evaluate in writing:
  - a. An assessment of the projects water management, water supply and conservation values including ecological values, vulnerability, endangerment and any other related environmental information.
  - b. The public purpose of the project, including the statutory authority;
  - c. An assessment of management cost, utilization, ownership, and appraised value estimates;
  - d. The determination whether the project conforms with local and state comprehensive plans or any other adopted governmental plans;
  - e. The determination whether the project meets one or more of the six criteria for Preservation 2000.
    1. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of development;
    2. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of subdivision which will result in multiple ownership and may make acquisition of the project more costly or less likely to be accomplished;



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3. The value of a significant portion of the land in the project is likely to appreciate at a rate that makes purchasing the land immediately with bond proceeds more cost-effective than delaying its purchase until acquisition funds which are not bonded are available for the project;
4. A significant portion of the land in the project serves to protect or recharge groundwater and to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation;
5. The project can be purchased at 80 percent of appraised value or less; or
6. A significant portion of the land in the project serves as habitat for endangered or threatend species or serves to protect endanged natural communities, and

**f. Potential management options.**

The Plan shall identify lands needed to protect or recharge groundwater and shall establish a plan for the acquisition as necessary to protect potable water supplies. These lands shall also serve to protect other valuable resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation. The Five Year Plan report will include a detailed summary of acquisition activity, modification or additions to the acquisition plan and a description of all land management activity.

2. **BOARD CONSIDERATION OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN:** As a minimum, the Board shall review all proposed projects and current projects on an annual basis. The Board shall annually adopt an update on the Five-Year Plans and after adoption, the projects approved shall be incorporated in a report and it will be made available to the public. The Board recognizes that the Five Year Plan is a list of projects that qualify for the program. Projects included on the Five Year Plan will not necessarily be acquired.



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**SUBJECT: SOR LAND SELECTION AND ACQUISITION POLICY**

### **SOR PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM**

Please return ten copies of this form with ten copies of all referenced attachments to:

Director, Save Our Rivers  
South Florida Water Management District  
P.O. Box 24680  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-4680

Please complete every question on this form. If necessary, designate N/A where a question is not applicable. Complete applications will receive more prompt and complete attention.

1. **Name and Location**

Property Name (commonly known as) \_\_\_\_\_  
County (or counties) \_\_\_\_\_

Within Municipal Boundaries - Yes ☐ No ☐ Please attach a location map (8 1/2 by 11") specifying the property location and include a north arrow (map drawn to scale if possible); also please provide with any additional property maps or aerial photography which may further clarify the suggested project.

2. **Size**

Estimated Number of Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Number of Parcels \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated Acreage per parcel \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Access**

Does the property front on a public road? Yes ☐ No ☐  
If not, describe type of legal access? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Ownership Information**

Identify the property owner and the contact address and telephone number  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Survey Information**

Are surveys and/or legal descriptions available? \_\_\_\_\_



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If so, attached or specify where they may be obtained. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Title Information

Are abstracts available from owner(s)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do/Does owner(s) have title insurance policies? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. SOR Qualifications

Provide detailed information concerning the qualifications of the property for water management, water supply or the conservation and protection of water resources. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Natural Characteristics

Provide a description of the natural characteristics of the property, including the predominant plant and animal life; specify types of trees and percentage of coverage, types of animal life, any rare, or endangered or threatened species, identified by Federal or State programs or other unique geological features, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also, provide information on reports prepared by any other agencies on the physical characteristics of the property; if possible, attach a copy of the report.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. General History Influences

What are the historical and archaeological values of the property? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Provide a description of general history of the property; include the identification of significant past disturbances, both natural and human; include dates of storm damage, fires, floods, exotic infestations, farming, grazing, mowing, or other site disturbances; also describe any structures, roads, rails, fences, etc.; is land involved in litigation (if yes, specify); is land on other public land acquisition lists (if yes, specify program and agency).  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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10. Buildings

Describe types and occupancy, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Future Impacts

Identify the anticipated future impacts which may have a negative affect on this property and whether the impacts are in the near future or are long range. \_\_\_\_\_

12. Planning and Zoning

Indicate local zoning and land use designation (from future land use map) on each parcel. \_\_\_\_\_

Identify any other adopted state, regional and local plans that may affect the project; is it compatible with the State Water Use Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Local Participation

Will the local government participate the funding? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Provide in-kind services? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Assist the management? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, to what extent? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Attachments

Identify and label each attachment: (with boundaries noted) Suggested attachments may include: zoning maps, soil maps, ownership maps, aerial photographs, vegetative maps, water resource maps, endangered species maps, on site photographs and U.S.G.S. Quadrangle maps.

Attachment A: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attachment B: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attachment C: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attachment D: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attachment E: \_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the Governing Board that inclusion of a property within the Five Year Plan pursuant to Section 373.59 ,F.S. does not reflect a definite intention by the



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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South Florida Water Management District to acquire said property. Inclusion within the Five Year Plan indicates that the subject property has acquisition potential, depending upon further investigation as to its environmental and management features and the negotiation of a mutually acceptable acquisition price.

15. Form Completed by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please state affiliation to owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy No. 4.200

Page 1 of 4

Effective: 11/85

Revised: 11/89

SUBJECT: NEGOTIATING STRATEGY FOR LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM

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**Policy No. 4.200**

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**Effective: 11/85**

**Revised: 11/89**

**SUBJECT: NEGOTIATING STRATEGY FOR LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM**

### **A. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. The District's efforts in land acquisition must be timely, effective and cost efficient.
2. The District bases its land acquisition program on accepted appraisal reports according to Policy No. 4.300.
3. The District's acquisition program includes a policy of identifying, surveying, legally describing, assessing for environmental risks and appraising the desired land. Offers are then made to the landowners based on appraisal values. If the negotiations are unsuccessful, the District may proceed to use the power of eminent domain where applicable.
4. In the District's project program, acquisitions are made at not less than the minimum appraised value.
5. In the Save Our Rivers Program, acquisitions for less than minimum appraised value are authorized.



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Policy No. 4.200

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Revised: 11/89

**SUBJECT: NEGOTIATING STRATEGY FOR LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM**

### **B. SCOPE**

1. This policy shall apply to all real property acquisitions in the District.

### **C. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

1. The South Florida Water Management District presently has two (2) programs which involve land acquisition.
2. The first program is the South Florida Water Management District and/or Army Corps of Engineers projects for flood control or water storage. This land acquisition program allows the District to exercise its right to eminent domain, if an amicable settlement cannot be reached.
3. The second program of land acquisition is the Save Our Rivers (SOR) Program. Under the SOR Program condemnation when authorized by law is appropriate:
  1. When the seller is willing in order to determine value.
  2. To complete a project for which the majority of the land has been acquired.
  3. When the land is determined to be critical to the success of the project.
4. In both acquisition programs, the District employs an appraiser, or in some cases two (2) appraisers, to prepare a report determining the market value of the owner's interest in the land desired. The appraisers will include, when applicable, an indication of damages and/or cost to cure to the remainder.



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5. When appraisers are engaged to determine market value, they may use three (3) approaches to determine value. Those approaches are the Market Data or Comparable Sale Approach, the Income Approach and the Cost Approach.
6. The Market Data or Comparable Sale Approach is widely accepted by the courts and actually supports its conclusion directly from the market itself.
7. The other two approaches are often used as support for the Market Data Approach but are rarely used alone.
8. The District reviews each appraisal report, and the compensation offered is based on the accepted appraisal reports.
9. With regard to acquisitions under the District and/or Corps of Engineers Program, offers made to the landowners are always not less than the minimum appraised value.
10. The District actively seeks donations or partial donations of land it finds important to its needs.
11. The Save Our Rivers Program seeks to acquire land from willing sellers on a negotiated basis. The policy is to negotiate with any willing seller and to pay no more than the maximum appraised value for the high priority lands.
12. When negotiating with owners whose property is of a lower priority, the District may notify the owners of the appraised value but explain that the District may pay less than the appraised value to purchase. In addition, the District will provide information to the owners concerning potential tax benefits of selling land to the District for less than the market value.
13. The District will continue its policy of offering minimum appraised value to owners whose property is needed for District projects or when the District is acting as local sponsor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

<b>DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY</b>		<b>TYPE OF AUTHORITY</b>
<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	
<b>GOVERNING BOARD</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR DESIGNEE</b>	<b>Authority to Negotiate Land Purchase for SOR Parcels.</b>



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy No. 5.001  
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Effective: 06-12-87

SUBJECT: Land Management Policy

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## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy No. 5.001

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Effective: 06-12-87

SUBJECT: Land Management Policy

### SAVE OUR RIVERS LANDS

#### I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. The policies, procedures, and guidelines contained herein are established to provide for the management of lands acquired under the Save Our Rivers program in a manner consistent with the District's mission and the legislative directives set forth in Chapter 373.59 Florida Statutes.
- B. These policies, procedures, and guidelines shall apply to all property acquired under the Save Our Rivers program.
- C. Nothing in these policies, procedures, and guidelines shall negate any statute, administrative rule, or other policy requirement.
- D. These policies, procedures, and guidelines will be reviewed at five (5) year intervals or earlier, if necessary, and updated as required. Public review and comment will be solicited as part of the review process.

#### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Cooperative Management Agreement - An agreement between two or more agencies setting forth the respective duties and responsibilities of each agency in the management of a specific tract of land.
- B. Lead Agency - Agency designated as the prime managing entity for a given tract of land; generally provides the on-site staff required for public use management.
- C. Cooperating Agencies - Two or more agencies working together to operate a specific management unit.



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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- D. Management Unit - A single tract or combination of tracts under one management program.
- E. Wildlife Corridor - Two or more contiguous tracts of land forming a natural linkage for wildlife populations.
- F. Primary Resource Lands - Lands having high water resource, fish and wildlife, and recreational values requiring acquisition by gift or purchase.
- G. Buffer Lands - Those adjacent lands that can sustain some development provided sufficient control is maintained to prevent adverse impacts to the primary resource lands.
- H. Remainder Lands - Lands protected by local zoning that do not need to be placed in public ownership.

### III. SELECTION OF LAND MANAGERS

- A. The District shall strive to obtain the expertise and assistance required for the management of specific tracts of land by entering into cooperative management agreements with other state and federal agencies, units of local government, and private non-profit organizations. The cooperative management agreement will designate a lead agency for management purposes.
- B. Where appropriate, the private sector will be encouraged to furnish certain management related facilities and services through the execution of real estate leases, agreements, and/or licenses.
- C. The District is charged by law with the responsibility for management of all lands acquired under the Save Our Rivers Program and therefore, must act as the final arbiter of disputes arising between cooperating agencies.



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### IV. MANAGEMENT PLANS

#### A. Conceptual Management Plan

1. The preparation of a conceptual management plan (CMP) may be required for each major tract of land prior to acquisition. The CMP shall be prepared by or at the direction of the District.
2. Each CMP shall set forth a recommended management proposal and contain general background data on the property including but not limited to:
  - a. size, location, and access
  - b. history
  - c. existing land use and improvements
  - d. soils
  - e. topography
  - f. hydrology
  - g. vegetation
  - h. fish and wildlife resources
  - i. recreational potential
  - j. water quality, and
  - k. existing and potential impacts from adjacent areas
3. The process utilized by the District in developing the CMP shall solicit the comments and recommendations of individuals, organizations, local governments, and those regional, state and federal agencies having a stake in the management of the tract.

#### B. Operational Management Plan

1. An operational management plan (OMP) shall be developed by the lead agency in consultation with the cooperating agencies for each major tract of land (or group of tracts) to be operated as a single management unit.



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2. The OMP shall contain detailed information on the status of the area's critical resources, set forth general and specific management goals, objectives, and guidelines for each, and outline the specific procedures, funding requirements, and activities necessary for their accomplishment.
3. The OMP shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.

### **C. Annual Work Plans**

1. An annual work plan shall be developed by each of the agencies participating in the management of a given unit.
2. Each work plan shall set forth the staffing levels, equipment and materials, funding requirements, and work activities proposed by the respective agency for implementation of the OMP.
3. The cooperating agencies shall meet at least once each year to discuss the status of the management unit and their planned activities for the upcoming year.

## **V. GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **A. Water Resources**

1. Management activities on Save Our Rivers tracts shall be directed toward conservation and protection of the unit's water resources.
2. The District shall not support or encourage any activities or development that would significantly alter the natural (undisturbed) movement and/or degrade the quality of surface or groundwater on management units.



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3. Where feasible, an attempt shall be made to restore a more natural hydroperiod on tracts where the drainage patterns have been substantially altered.
4. Visitor programs shall inform and educate the public relative to the importance of the area in maintaining adequate supplies of good quality water for the South Florida area.

B. Fish and Wildlife Resources

1. Management activities on Save Our Rivers tracts shall seek to establish and maintain an appropriate number and variety of indigenous game and non-game species.
2. Particular emphasis shall be placed on the identification and management of critical habitat for endangered or threatened species residing on or frequenting the management units.
3. On areas where hunting will be allowed, consideration shall be given to the need for the establishment of sanctuary areas or "no hunting zones" to provide additional protection for endangered species and facilitate passive observation of wildlife.
4. Activities that may contribute to a decline in water quality and/or a reduction in critical wildlife habitat shall not be encouraged on management units.

C. Native Plant Communities

1. Management practices on Save Our Rivers tracts shall seek to restore and maintain an appropriate variety and distribution of native plant communities.



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2. Particular emphasis shall be placed on the identification and protection of rare and endangered species.
3. The planting of exotic plant species shall be prohibited on all management units. Management practices will strive to identify existing infestations and to develop and implement appropriate control and/or eradication measures.
4. Management of the forest resources on select tracts shall be undertaken in consultation with the Division of Forestry.
5. Forest management practices shall strive to maintain age-class diversity and where appropriate, species diversity.

**D. Archaeological and Historical Resources**

1. The identification of sites within the management units that have unique archaeological and/or historical significance shall be undertaken in consultation with the Florida Bureau of History and Archives.
2. Management practices shall strive to protect these unique resources and in appropriate situations allow for the provision of access and interpretive facilities to enhance their appreciation and enjoyment by the public.

**E. Recreational Use**

1. Public use of management units for appropriate resource based outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, horseback riding, hiking, boating, canoeing, and nature study shall be permitted and encouraged where such use does not interfere with protection and management of the area's critical water and environmental resources.



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- 2. Management practices shall determine the mix of activities and level of use appropriate for each management unit. Activities that are considered highly disruptive to other recreational uses or those that are clearly or potentially destructive of the area's critical resources will be prohibited.**
- 3. The use of airboats, swamp buggies, tracked vehicles, motorcycles, and other types of off road vehicles on most management units shall be prohibited. Where authorized, motorized access will be limited to the greatest extent possible to the use of four-wheeled vehicles licensed for street use on certain designated roads.**
- 4. Recreational development on most management units shall be limited to the greatest extent possible to the provision of basic facilities for access, health and safety, and interpretation. The provision of certain facilities and services through the awarding of appropriate concession contracts may be authorized on some areas.**
- 5. Rules and regulations governing the public use of all management units shall be established and enforced by the lead agency.**
- 6. The construction and maintenance of private camps and campsites on management units shall be prohibited.**
- 7. Consideration may be given to the development and implementation of a permit/fee system on management units.**
- 8. Programs shall be developed and implemented to inform and educate visitors with respect to water resource management issues and the critical resources found on each management unit.**





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### **F. Agricultural Use**

1. Agricultural activities conducted on Save Our Rivers lands shall be limited to the grazing of livestock on native range and farming practices contributing to the production of food and cover for wildlife.
2. The conversion of native range to improved pasture shall be prohibited on all management units.
3. To the extent practical, management practices shall seek to convert existing improved pastures to native range.
4. The development and implementation of livestock grazing programs on management units shall be undertaken in consultation with the Soil Conservation Service.
5. Managing agencies shall implement measures to reduce potential conflicts between livestock grazing operations and concurrent recreational use.

### **G. Bee Leases and Apiaries**

1. Consideration may be given by the District to the establishment of apiaries on management units through the development and awarding of appropriate leases.
2. Current state of Florida Statutes, guidelines and standards regarding fees, distance between sites and from property boundaries, and related matters will be utilized in developing lease specifications.



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3. Leases shall not be transferable or assignable in whole or in part without the written consent of the District.
4. If an existing annual lease is not renewed, the former lease holder shall have thirty (30) days from the expiration of the lease to remove all of his/her capital improvements from the area. Future leasing of this site shall then be determined through a publicly announced drawing conducted by the District.

### H. Other

1. District shall support those research and academic endeavors on management units by qualified agencies, educational institutions, and public and private conservation organizations that will contribute to more effective management and use of these areas.
2. Requests from government and/or private sources for permission to place signs, billboards, roads, power lines, pipelines, and similar items on or through Save Our Rivers property shall be approved by the District only when the applicant has affirmatively demonstrated that the proposed use is consistent with preservation and enhancement of the area's critical resources and use of the area by the public for recreational purposes.
3. Management decision making shall consider whether the lands are primary resource lands, remainder lands, or buffer lands.
4. Local government support shall be encouraged throughout the management process particularly with respect to the regulation of buffer areas and the creation of wildlife corridors.
5. Where necessary, to protect the resources of the property, law enforcement assistance will be requested from the appropriate agency.



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6. Detailed procedures to implement this policy are identified in the Land Acquisition/Management Procedures flow chart.

### OTHER DISTRICT LANDS (Not To Include SOR Lands)

#### I. Management Of Other District Lands

1. The management of these lands shall be in accordance with the existing statutes and rules which include the following:
  - a. The District may lease any lands, or interests in lands in accordance with Section 40E-9.957, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.093, Florida Statutes.
  - b. The District may convey any interest in lands to other governmental entities for management in accordance with Section 40E-9.961, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.056, Florida Statutes.
  - c. The District may permit the usage or occupancy of right of way, works, or lands in accordance with Chapter 40E-6, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.085, Florida Statutes.



*Loxahatchee*

**Appendix F**  
**Save Our Rivers**  
**Land Evaluation Matrix**

# SAVE OUR RIVERS LAND EVALUATION MATRIX

The Save Our Rivers Division has developed a two part Evaluation Matrix for the purpose of screening and prioritizing prospective additions to the Five Year Plan. Based on the Project Ranking Criteria and Guidelines for Site Priority Ranking, each project will be scored on a 1-5 scale for each parameter. In addition, weighting factors, or multipliers, have been added to certain high priority parameters. The first phase, or Category I parameters, deal strictly with water resource related issues.

## CATEGORY I

<u>PARAMETER</u>	<u>WEIGHTING FACTOR</u>
1. WATER MANAGEMENT	5
2. WATER SUPPLY	5
3. CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES	5

Each project will be screened by the parameters in Category I first. If passing scores are not attained, the project will be dropped from the list and will be given no further consideration. After the initial screening is complete, seven additional factors in Category II will be evaluated. Those include:

## CATEGORY II

<u>PARAMETER</u>	<u>WEIGHTING FACTOR</u>
4. MANAGEABILITY	2
5. HABITAT DIVERSITY	2

6. SPECIES DIVERSITY	1
7. CONNECTEDNESS	2
8. RARITY	2
9. VULNERABILITY	1
10. NATURE ORIENTED HUMAN USE	1

It is intended that project scoring be conducted by a team of reviewers, each of whom is familiar with all the projects. In this manner, any personal biases will carry through all the projects, rather than only being reflected in one or two. All projects will be rated against each other so comparisons can be made among parcels, rather than adhering to a strict set of criteria for scoring purposes.

## PROJECT RANKING CRITERIA

The following items are intended to be used for consideration when scoring. The reviewer is not bound to only these categories. Personal knowledge of additional factors should be included.

### 1. WATER MANAGEMENT

- A. Floodplains
- B. Flow ways
- C. Peak discharge attenuation
- D. Water quality improvement
- E. Aquifer recharge

This section deals with the physical water management parameters of the site. Does the project area lie within the floodplain or flow way of a river or stream? Does it provide basin storage for a surrounding watershed? Does ponding in low lying uplands or wetlands reduce peak discharge rates and recharge groundwater aquifers? Is water quality improved or maintained by allowing overland sheetflow and ponding? What properties, areas and activities can be protected by the site's flood retention/detention capacity?

### 2. WATER SUPPLY

- A. Existing wellfield
- B. Proposed wellfield on local comprehensive plan
- C. Reduced threshold area
- D. Aquifer source—is it hydraulically connected to water table
- E. Class I surface water

This category discusses all water supply issues. Are wellfields present or proposed on a local

government's comprehensive plan? What impact would construction of a wellfield have on the water table aquifer and associated wetlands. Is the project within a reduced threshold area? Does Class I surface water flow through project or receive runoff from it?

### 3. CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

- A. Area of critical state concern
- B. Aquatic Preserve/Outstanding Florida Water
- C. Quantity and quality of major wetland systems

Has the project site been declared an Area of Critical State Concern? Is it adjacent to or within the watershed of an Aquatic Preserve or Outstanding Florida Water? Does the site contain major slough or other wetland systems which are significant water resources? Has the site been recommended for protection by a state or local program?

### 4. MANAGEABILITY

- A. Restoration ability/cost

This is an assessment of long term viability. Is the site large enough? Are degraded habitats in restorable condition? Is control burning as a management tool necessary or feasible? Is reflooding for water management or water quality improvement necessary or feasible? Will there be trespass or vandalism problems? How expensive will it be to properly manage the land?

### 5. HABITAT DIVERSITY

- A. Variety of viable natural habitat types/plant communities present
- B. All factors present for perpetuation of the population (food/foraging, cover/nesting, water)
- C. Degree of exotic plant infestation or disturbance from introduced animals
- D. Degree of human disturbance
- E. Could rare species of plants or animals be relocated to this site?
- F. Size

Is the site large enough to support a variety of communities? Does the site provide the necessary habitat factors, including food, cover and water, for the perpetuation of wildlife populations within the project boundaries? Do exotic plants or introduced animal species present long term problems for the site. Can they be controlled? Has the site been overdrained or impacted by off-road vehicles? Is

there suitable habitat/carrying capacity to support re-introduced native plants or animals.

### 6. SPECIES DIVERSITY

- A. Can the area support and maintain stable wildlife populations
- B. Bird rookery present
- C. Suitable habitat for migratory or transient wildlife species

Are most or all of the wildlife species normally associated with that habitat type present? Is the area large enough to maintain a breeding population, rather than just a number of individuals? Is the area used or suitable for use by migratory species?

### 7. CONNECTEDNESS

- A. Proximity to protected lands
- B. Wildlife corridor

This criteria concerns how the site links with other protected lands or large parcels of undisturbed lands. Does it lie within or will its protection create a wildlife corridor? How do the habitats relate to those nearby?

### 8. RARITY

- A. Endangered - threatened - rare - species of special concern present?
- B. Endangered - threatened - rare - species of special concern habitat?
- C. Unique ecological habitat
- D. Free flowing river or stream

This criteria incorporates the rarity or uniqueness of each of the site's community types and the rarity of the species it provides habitat for. The term "RARE" is considered to include endangered, threatened and species of special concern. Is the site unique by containing a major free flowing river or stream?

### 9. VULNERABILITY

- A. Urban development pressure
- B. Agricultural development pressure
- C. Is the site large enough to shield itself from adjacent development

This addresses the likelihood of events which might degrade or destroy the site through urban or agricultural development.

## 10. NATURE ORIENTED HUMAN USE

- A. Recreation potential
- B. Proximity of site to recreational users
- C. Game species present (harvestable resource)
- D. Suitability for scientific research
- E. Educational/Interpretive value

This concerns the site's suitability for human activities when consistent with the environmental sensitivity of those lands, and when such activities are compatible with the purposes for which the lands were acquired.

## GUIDELINES FOR SITE PRIORITY RANKING

### WATER MANAGEMENT

- 1. Property never floods; is not associated with a river, stream or other watercourse. Provides minimal flood storage for the watershed. No wetlands or other ponded areas.
- 2. Property occasionally floods during major storm events, but drains quickly. Provides basin storage during heavy storm events. Sparsely vegetated shallow wetlands.
- 3. Property is mostly low uplands or partially within floodplain of river or stream. Intermittent wetland sloughs. Short term ponding allows some aquifer recharge.
- 4. Within floodplain. Major wetland sloughs extending offsite. Numerous isolated wetlands. Seasonal inundation maintains groundwater aquifer.
- 5. Property is normally inundated during wet season. Within flow way of river or stream. Large interconnected marshes or sloughs. Serves as storage "sink" for upstream basin. Extensive groundwater aquifer recharge occurs due to year round standing water in wetlands.

### WATER SUPPLY

**NOTE: WHERE WELLFIELD DEVELOPMENT IS UNLIKELY AND NO OTHER SCORE IS APPROPRIATE, ASSIGN A VALUE OF "2.5".**

- 1. Salt water intrusion present in wells. Contains connate water. Under wellfield protection ordinance. Wellfield is directly connected with water table aquifer. All project

wetlands will be constantly drained by wellfield pumping.

- 2. Surface wetlands will remain wet only following heavy rain events. Degree of confinement inadequate to protect wetlands from induced leakage.
- 3. Water levels in wetlands will be lowered, but shallow standing water will still remain. Cone of depression minimized by linear distance separating wellfield and wetlands. Pumping will adversely affect wetlands only during extended drought.
- 4. Well-drained sandy soil, suitable for local aquifer recharge "coastal ridge. Within Reduced Threshold Area. Existing wellfield inadequately protected by local ordinance. Water supply aquifer separated from water table by confining layer of very low permeability with low leakage. Project discharges to Class I surface water.
- 5. Delineated on comprehensive plan for wellfield development. Class I surface water flows through project. Existing wellfield not under wellfield protection ordinance. Water supply aquifer is well below ground or not hydraulically connected and will have no adverse impact on water table.

### CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

- 1. Development prohibited by state or local program. All uplands. No significant water resource areas.
- 2. Development restricted by state or local program. Viable natural area isolated by development. Minimal wetland areas or irreparably altered wetlands.
- 3. Within the watershed of an Outstanding Florida Water (OFW), Aquatic Preserve (AP) or Area of Critical State Concern (ACC). Strong public support exists for protection. Isolated, seasonal wetlands. Restorable wetland systems.
- 4. Buffers lands adjacent to OFW, AP or ACC. Strong local government support for protection. Considerable portion of the site consists of mixed upland/wetland system, with a diversity of habitat types. Minimal restoration needed.



5. Property is adjacent to OFW, AP or ACC. A significant natural community exists with no regulatory protection. Large contiguous wetland sloughs exist totally on site or extend onto adjacent lands. Habitat in extremely good condition, showing little or no signs of stress or disturbance.

#### MANAGEABILITY

1. Too small or degraded for restoration. Expense of restoration not justified by end result. Highly vulnerable to external impacts, making management nearly impossible.
2. Location and/or extent of degradation would make management difficult and expensive. Questionable whether restoration programs would be successful. Historic trespass/vandalism problems.
3. Could be restored to good condition, but would require vigilant management. Exotic plant removal/hydrologic restoration necessary. Control burning will be difficult due to external land uses. Trespass/ vandalism correctable, but will be expensive.
4. Habitats in good condition, but will require regular attention, such as burning. Size of area permits extensive restoration or manipulation of hydrologic regime without impacting offsite property owners.
5. How maintenance habitats in excellent condition. Control burning can be conducted without fear of impacting offsite interests. No restoration of natural systems required. Location minimizes problems with trespassers and vandalism.

#### HABITAT DIVERSITY

1. How species and community diversity. Seriously degraded by human activity"overdrained, wetlands denuded by off-road vehicle use. Exotic plant infestation beyond control. Site too small/isolated to maintain normal flora and fauna.
2. Fair habitat. Moderate species and community diversity. Might be capable of supporting populations of relatively tolerant species. Most animal species will probably have to leave site to obtain all factors

necessary for survival. Exotics controllable with great effort and expense.

3. Good habitat. Good diversity of species and communities. Capable of supporting populations of most typical species. Food/forage, cover/nesting and water generally present. Exotics controllable with some expense. Minimal human disturbance.
4. Excellent habitat. Large enough to support diverse species, communities and successional stages. Exotics minimal and isolated. Good potential as relocation site for rare plants or animals.
5. Outstanding habitat. Contains large and diverse communities which extend offsite. Varying stages of succession present. Large enough to maintain long term disturbance/succession cycle. No exotics present.

#### SPECIES DIVERSITY

1. Little or no wildlife present. Habitat not suitable for migratory species.
2. Few varieties of wildlife present. Most are associated with disturbed sites. No bird rookeries on site.
3. Good diversity of wildlife. Size and diversity of populations limited by project area.
4. Large diverse site. Most varieties of wildlife present, except for large predators. Breeding populations present. Habitat diverse enough to support migratory or transient wildlife species.
5. Many diverse species present, including large predators and rare species. Large gene pools present due to size/links to similar habitat types. Breeding colonies of birds present. Excellent potential as relocation site for rare species.

#### CONNECTEDNESS

1. Isolated from other protected lands by an impenetrable barrier or large expanse of unsuitable/unrestorable habitat. No significant connecting corridors. Project isolated by urban development.

2. Isolated from other protected lands of significant size by a moderate expanse of unsuitable habitat, such as an interstate highway. Wildlife movement between protected lands restricted essentially to avian fauna.
3. Isolated from other protected lands of significant size by an expanse of marginally suitable habitat. Possible to connect with or create a wildlife corridor suitable for terrestrial species, but will require restoration.
4. Connected with protected areas, but not over a wide expanse. Connecting corridors in good condition or easily restorable. Good potential for creating wildlife corridor simply by acquisition.
5. Directly contiguous with protected lands over a large boundary. Acquisition will create an extensive wildlife corridor.

#### RARITY

1. Common community types in poor to average condition. Habitat types widespread throughout region. No rare plants or animals. No unique ecological habitat.
2. Typical community types still represented by extensive acreages throughout region. A few uncommon species, but no significant occurrences. Poor habitat for rare species.
3. Good examples of natural communities. Habitat types well represented statewide, but rare locally. A few rare species present. Good habitat exists for rare species, but limited in amount.
4. Excellent examples of natural communities. Rare habitat available. A number of rare species present, but none dependent on this site for survival. Unique ecological habitat types or old growth present. One of last remaining free flowing streams or rivers in region.
5. Extraordinary example of a natural community. Abundant unique ecological habitat. Critical habitat for a globally endangered specie. Nationally significant geological feature or wildlife site. Cited by

state or federal government as a Wild and Scenic river.

#### VULNERABILITY

1. Due to remoteness and surrounding land use it is highly unlikely this tract will be proposed for agricultural or urban development in the foreseeable future. Size of the tract allows it to buffer critical internal habitats from offsite impacts.
2. How intensity agricultural use, such as native range, currently exists or is proposed. Low intensity development would not impact critical internal habitats, but buffers would be affected.
3. More intensive agricultural development, such as improved pasture, is proposed. More intensive agricultural development, such as citrus, has occurred on similar parcels, but more suitable land still remains undeveloped. Low intensity urban development, such as rural ranchettes, is proposed on local land use plan. Portions of buffer areas would be remain undisturbed, but development activities, such as drainage, would shorten the hydroperiod of internal wetlands.
4. Located in good development site. Potential for urban development is high. Conversion to intensive agriculture, such as citrus, is occurring on surrounding parcels. Wetlands would remain undeveloped, but upland buffers would be developed as sub-division or orange grove.
5. Prime real estate, presently for sale. Last remaining tract suitable for agricultural development in area. Development for urban or agricultural purposes will destroy the natural value of the site.

#### NATURE ORIENTED HUMAN USE

1. Unsuitable for passive recreation. Aesthetically unappealing. Little scientific or educational value. Not suitable for hunting or fishing. Site inaccessible.
2. Suitable for limited passive recreation, but special management might be necessary to prevent adverse impacts. Pleasant setting. Useful site for school or nature center field trips or student research. Proximity of surrounding users prohibits use of high

powered weapons. Sport fishing would require removal of rough fish and restocking.

3. Suitable for limited passive recreation. Attractive environment. Ecologically interesting enough to be a good outing destination for local groups like Sierra Club, Audubon, etc. Useful site for scientific research. Limited hunting with carefully set bag limits.
4. Good for several types of passive recreation. Large enough to allow limited camping without adversely affecting more sensitive parts of the site. Scenic. Suitable for nature trails and/or environmental center. Valuable site for scientific research. Special enough to be a regional recreation destination. With proper game management, hunting with primitive weapons could be allowed on an annual basis. Many areas suitable for fishing.
5. Outstanding site for a variety of passive recreational uses. Excellent for nature trails and/or environmental center. Could support a campground as well as back country camping.

Important, well documented scientific study site. Features so exceptional the site could attract national/international visitors. Could be operated as a wildlife management area by GFC. Offers excellent sport fishing. Easily accessible

**"The land and sea, the  
animals, fishes and birds,  
the sky of heaven and the  
orbs, the forests,  
mountains and rivers, are  
not small themes . . ."**

